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## 'IN YONDER GRAVE A DRUID LIES'

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The first line of Collins's *Ode occasion'd by the death of Mr. Thomson*, 'In yonder grave a Druid lies', is a statement of the theme of the poem. The word 'Druid' has given the critics some trouble. It troubled Mrs. Barbauld,<sup>1</sup> who wrote: 'There is no propriety in calling Thomson a Druid or a pilgrim'; and Professor Garrod,<sup>2</sup> who chastens what he loves, feels constrained to chime in with her complaint. Yet the word, while it is meant to stimulate reflection and to diffuse a colouring of awe over the line, cannot be meant to baffle us. It is essential that it should be understood, for it tells us at once under what aspect the dead poet is to be lamented. The eye slides over the line as the ear might follow the opening notes of a familiar-sounding melody, and then, in place of the expected 'poet', the rich complexities of 'Druid' strike us, surprising us into a quickened apprehension of what kind of poet it is that has been lost. The single challenging word in a very plain line of verse, it must have been Collins's approved choice; and since it is left to stand by itself, without amplification, he must have believed that the meaning would be sufficiently clear. If there is indeed no propriety in the description, its absence cannot be put down to that indolent carelessness of Collins, which Professor Garrod so severely presses. He was not careless over diction, though his care was not always felicitous; and when he spoke as a poet over the recent grave of another poet, whom he admired and loved, he is likely to have been very careful indeed. Moreover, he closes the poem on the same word. The 'musing Briton' of the future repeats it beside the 'stone and pointed clay' of the grave.

O! vales, and wild woods, shall He say,  
In yonder grave your Druid lies!

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical works of Mr. William Collins, with a Prefatory Essay by Mrs. Barbauld* (Cadell and Davies, 1797).

<sup>2</sup> Collins (1928).

There is nothing of inadvertence in such an arrangement. The repetition confirms Collins's intention and by the link of a possessive pronoun relates the dead poet to the landscape that has been evoked during the ode. The stream, the woods and the meads are a great deal more than a setting; they join with the human figures of the poem—for they *are* human, young people whose 'ease' and 'health' leaves them with the emotional energy for poetical enthusiasm, and not goddesses in a sailing-boat, as Professor Garrod supposes—in lamenting the poet, and they suffer some impoverishment by his death. ('And thou, lorn stream, whose sullen tide No sedge-crowned Sisters now attend.') It is the loss of a poet-priest of nature that we are invited to contemplate, and it is in this sense that those readers, to whom the word 'Druid' has not been a stumbling-block, have taken it. Thus the editor of Thomson in the *Oxford Poets* writes of the poet, before he left Scotland: 'We see him, already a young Druid—the part for which, as Collins happily noted, his genius was cast—in the alleys of Marlefield woods.' Certainly this is the prime meaning of the word in Collins's ode, and it is established by the other designations of Thomson, 'woodland pilgrim', 'sweet bard', 'meek Nature's child'. ('Woodland pilgrim', included in Mrs. Barbauld's censure, transfers us from early Britain to the Middle Ages, in Collins's eclectic way, but it reinforces the association of devotional feeling with nature; the woods are a holy place, as they are in the forest passage in *Summer*, and the poet writes 'woodland pilgrim' as we say 'Canterbury pilgrim'.)<sup>1</sup>

Yet, though this is the prime meaning and the only one explicit in the slender elegy, it does not exhaust the content of the word 'Druid' as it was understood in the middle of the eighteenth century in certain poetical and antiquarian circles; for the Druids were believed to have been not only priests of nature but philosophers probing her secrets, metaphysicians, enlightened educators of youth, and ardent patriots, enflaming their people in the struggle for liberty and heartening them with songs to cast back the unconquered Roman over sea. How much of this idealized and impressive figure is implied in Collins's 'Druid' cannot be exactly estimated, but most of it can be shown to be applicable to Thomson, while one important aspect, not explicit in this ode, had been touched previously by Collins in his 'Ode to Liberty'. Since, therefore, his characteristic diction is concentrated and densely associative, it is no very bold assumption that in his ear, at least, all these overtones vibrated together.

The Druid appeared in English literature at the beginning of the seventeenth century. His figure was retrieved by the scholars of the

<sup>1</sup> A remoter but still harmonizing note is struck by the quotation from Virgil's fifth eclogue on the title-page, in which the dead shepherd Daphnis is associated with the seasonal rites of the countryside.

Renaissance from the Greek and Latin historians,<sup>1</sup> and presently introduced on to the stage in Fletcher's *Bonduca* (1608), and into poetry in Drayton's *Polyolbion* (1612), and Milton's 'Lycidas' (1637), and his Latin poem to Manso (1638). As far as literary sources of information go, the antiquarians and poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had access to all that we have now, but their approach to them was different from ours. Much that they read there was an invitation to patriotic idealization and supplied their emulous souls with antiquities which could be elevated into an equivalence with those of Greece and Rome. Something of this process may be seen in the poem to Manso, where Milton adduces the sacred chants of the Druids to convince the Italian that Britain also had long been a land of poetry. But Milton was not really enthusiastic about the Druids, as a reference to his *History of Britain* will show. He demurred at their reputation as philosophers ('Philosophers I cannot call them, reported men factious and ambitious') and refused to say worse of the invading Romans than that they 'beat us into some civility; likely else to have continued longer in a barbarous, savage manner of life'. Much more could be made of those whom Strabo called the most just of men, and whom Caesar described as instructing their disciples in the order of nature and the strength and power of the immortal gods. Much more had already been made of them by Drayton in his brief references in *Polyolbion* and by Selden in his notes to that poem. There<sup>2</sup> they are 'sacred Bards', who in their invocation of one all-healing Power came near to acknowledging the true God. They are profound philosophers, 'Like whom great Nature's depths no man yet ever knew', and whose learning antedates that of the Romans ('And learning long with us, ere 'twas with them in use'). Caesar, indeed, was envious of the Britons, and his account of them can (where derogatory) be discounted. What could he know of us? The traditions of the Welsh bards go back beyond the writings of the Romans and are a safer guide to druidical manners. Already we find in Selden's notes the suggestion, much elaborated in the following century, that in the last resource Greek philosophy is indebted to the Druids, for he remarks that Lipsius, a Dutch savant of the sixteenth century, doubts whether they received the doctrine of metempsychosis from Pythagoras or he from them. William Stukeley, the eighteenth-century enthusiast, was to call Pythagoras 'the Arch-Druid', thus turning the tables on insolent Greece and haughty Rome.

The prime motive, then, in the idealizing of the Druids was patriotic; they saved us from considering ourselves, as Milton had done, the bar-

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted for all the classical references in what follows, and for many references to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century antiquarians to T. D. Kendrick, *The Druids. A Study in Celtic Prehistory* (1927).

<sup>2</sup> *Polyolbion*. Songs I, VI, IX, X, and notes.

barous recipients of a foreign culture and substituted the more pleasing conception of early Britain as a centre of intellectual light. This motive was strengthened in the eighteenth century by the cult of liberty, of which the Druids were supposed to be early adherents. Nothing stirred the pride of the eighteenth-century Briton more strongly than the reflection that he was free, while every other European, except the Swiss, was the slave of some form of autocratic government; and he had the rare satisfaction of hearing his estimate of his superior condition confirmed by voices from abroad. Moreover, history instructed him that his country always had been free, barring such unfortunate episodes as the Roman and Norman conquests. This is the burden of Thomson's 'Rule Britannia'. It is also the theme of his long poem *Liberty* (1735) and of Collins's 'Ode to Liberty', in both of which Druids appear. They hold this position because, by instilling their faith in the immortality of the soul into the warriors of their race, they taught them to despise death in battle, and may thus be considered the fountain-head of that valour which beat back Caesar from the coast of Kent, confronted Paulinus in Mona and supported the revolt of Boadicea. Tacitus<sup>1</sup> had placed in the mouth of the Caledonian chieftain, Galgacus, a speech in which the liberty of the Britons is emphasized. To Thomson they are 'erect from Nature's hand'; they know no master 'save creating Heaven Or such as choice and common good ordains', and this freedom is integrally connected with the natural setting of their lives, the forests which were

at once  
 Their verdant city, high-embowering fane,  
 And the gay circle of their woodland wars;  
 For by the Druid taught, that death but shifts  
 The vital scene, they that prime fear despised;  
 And, prone to rush on steel, disdain'd to spare  
 An ill-saved life, that must again return.<sup>2</sup>

In Collins's ode the Druids are found singing before the British chiefs in the celestial temple of Liberty. I do not know where Collins got the notion of this temple, which stood, he says, 'an hoary Pile' in some forgotten 'religious Wood . . . midst the green Navel of the Isle'. Its overthrow, whether at the hands of Roman or Dane, is unrecorded, but its 'beauteous Model,' its Platonic idea, still lies beyond the 'braided Clouds . . . amidst the bright pavilion'd Plains' of Heaven. The whole notion may be an unsupported sally of his imagination,<sup>3</sup> stimulated, perhaps, by a

<sup>1</sup> *Agricola*, xxx.

<sup>2</sup> *Liberty*, Book iv, ll. 627-33.

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Barbauld, *op. cit.*, says that Collins has taken advantage of a tradition 'less known' (sc. than the former connection of Britain with the Continent) that in the time of the Druids there existed in Britain a temple sacred to Liberty, but she gives no reference.



hint in Thomson's poem; at all events it proves that Collins thought the Druids suitable inhabitants of such a temple.<sup>1</sup>

Political liberty, however, is the fruit of virtue. Thomson's fifth book is full of the need for integrity, public spirit, and 'an active flood of universal love', as preservatives of freedom. We expect to find, then, that the moral character of the Druids stood high, and this is indeed the case. In the pages of the eighteenth-century archaeologists and historians, of Toland, Stukeley, and Carte,<sup>2</sup> the Druids appear as the apostles of that interdependent triplicity of ideals—freedom, virtue, and culture—that Collins had expressed in his 'Ode to Simplicity', and Thomson throughout *Liberty*. Of the authors just mentioned, Carte is chiefly important as summing up the view of the Druids held by a laborious and responsible historian at the end of the first half of the eighteenth century, two years before Collins published his ode on Thomson's death. Both the others are eccentrics, with an individual angle on their subject. Toland was a Deist, who regarded the Druids as the arch-examples of the arch-evil, priestcraft, and he cannot touch on their rites or mysteries without a contemptuous Deistic snort. But he was also an Irish-speaking Celt from Inishowen, deeply concerned to plead for the study of Celtic antiquities, in whose eyes the order of Druids in Gaul and Britain was a great achievement of the Celtic genius;

<sup>1</sup> Thomson (*Liberty*, III, 539–70) makes Liberty retire during the Dark Ages to 'the celestial regions', where 'Far other scenes and palaces arise, Adorned profuse with other arts divine'; cf. the gems and mural sculptures in Collins's temple ('Ode to Liberty', ll. 89–128). The question of Collins's indebtedness to Thomson is difficult. There are many resemblances. *A propos* of one, the appearance of Sparta and Athens as the temporary homes of Liberty in both poems, Professor Garrod remarks: 'If [*Liberty*] were not so dull a poem, and Collins had not been so lazy a man, I might think he had read it.' There is every appearance that he had done so. Not only is the progress of Liberty from Greece to Rome and then to Florence, Pisa, Venice, Genoa, Switzerland and Britain practically the same in both poems, but Britain is presented in both as the ancient home of Liberty, and allusion is made in both to the prehistoric continuity of Britain and Gaul and their separation by an inbreak of the sea. Collins, however, does not mention Thomson in his notes, but ascribes the legend to 'several of our old historians', and adds: 'I don't remember that any Poetical Use has been hitherto made of it.' (It occurs, however, in *Polyolbion*, Song XVIII.) A. S. P. Woodhouse, (*Collins and the Creative Imagination*, 1931) commenting only on the last point, suggests that Collins had been directed by his antiquarian friends to the old historians, especially Camden's *Britannia*, and had overlooked Thomson's handling of the passage. But this does not account for such a sequence of similarities. Edward Gay Ainsworth (*Poor Collins*, 1937), who has traced them all, feels justified in calling Collins's 'Ode to Liberty' a 'concentrated and somewhat confused version' of Thomson's poem. I do not think that the obviousness of the historical material and the fondness of the eighteenth century for 'progresses' quite cover the case. It is perhaps best to assume a rapid reading of *Liberty* some years before the 'Ode to Liberty' was written, so that the argument of the poem was retained and the detail forgotten, and then a rediscovery of the story of the continuity and separation of England and France in Camden.

<sup>2</sup> Toland's *Critical History of the Celtic Religion and Learning: containing an Account of the Druids* appeared posthumously in *A Collection of Several Pieces by Mr. John Toland*, 1726. William Stukeley, *Stonehenge, a Temple Restor'd to the British Druids* (1740); *Abury, a Temple of the British Druids* (1743). I also use phrases from *The Brill, Caesar's Camp at Pancras and The Weddings*; both tracts were reprinted in the second edition of Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1776) and seem to date originally from 1758 and 1723 respectively. *A General History of England. By Thomas Carte, an Englishman*, 1747.

and, first and last, his racial enthusiasm overpowers his Deistic spleen. It is to be observed that this racial consciousness is special to Toland, and is otherwise very rare among eighteenth-century enthusiasts, to whom Celt and Saxon were alike 'Britons' and had an equal claim to their filial respect. The eighteenth-century patriot did not call himself an Anglo-Saxon but a Briton. 'Britons never shall be slaves', wrote Thomson. The Druids were Britons, and the pensive mourner by Thomson's grave is a Briton, and both inhabit Britain, the land of oak-trees and liberty, and that is good enough. It was the soil, not the blood, that was the basic consideration: the men were bred by the land: the continuity was territorial, and the Druid was adopted by the eighteenth century as easily as King Arthur by the Middle Ages. Both were 'ours'.<sup>1</sup> The Welsh, whose bardic tradition was held to descend uninterrupted from the British bards, might be allowed to have a special interest in their ancestors, but not so as to exclude the rest of Britain from its birthright.

William Stukely was a more single-minded enthusiast than Toland. His mission was to establish the druidical origin of the megalithic monuments of Great Britain, and his two copiously illustrated folios on Stonehenge and Avebury are still warm with an excitement which perceives in the admired structures the architecture 'of pure reason and good sense', and fills them in imagination with 'a solemn sacrifice of magnanimous Britons'. Toland, too, had believed that the stone circles were British temples, but he and Stukeley disagreed *toto coelo* as to the nature and value of the rites performed in them. Stukeley was a believing Christian and a clergyman, and to get full imaginative satisfaction out of his stone circles he had to conceive the Arch-Druid in his own image. It was less surprising to his generation than it is to us to read his assertion that the Druids were 'of Abraham's religion entirely'. To Stukeley, as to Camden and Selden, Europe had been peopled by the descendants of Japhet, from whom Gaul, Briton, Greek, and Roman were alike derived. All ultimate origins were Biblical, as all languages led back to Hebrew. If we find in the Old Testament that the patriarchs planted groves and raised altars and pillars of stone, what more probable than that the Druids, who did the same things, were of the same family and occupied in patriarchal worship? Some adventurous philology is added to the rationalized mythology of the Renaissance scholars to elucidate these remote occurrences, and Stukeley concludes that the Druids were a Phoenician colony, brought to Britain by the Tyrian Hercules, who was the son-in-law of

<sup>1</sup> Camden, working out the likeness and hence the relationship between Gauls and Britons, by means of a comparison of customs and characteristics, matches the traits of the ancient Gauls, as reported by classical historians, indifferently with those the same historians' report of the Britons and with what is generally known in his day of 'our Britons', i.e. Elizabethan Englishmen.

Abraham. There was nothing unusual about this mode of research. The vast synthesizing learning of the Renaissance, now so completely antiquated, was still alive in his day.<sup>1</sup> Where he shows his idiosyncrasy is in his insistence that the Druids kept this patriarchal religion unblemished, and, moreover, that they may fairly be called Christian. To this undogmatic Churchman of the Enlightenment the essence of Christianity is 'a knowledge of the plurality of persons in the Deity', and that, he thinks, they might have attained by the 'strength of reason'. Indeed, he undertakes to suggest the line their reasoning could have taken. We hear nothing of the 'juggling arts and tricks' by which, according to Carte and Toland, 'they dexterously led the people blindfold'. On the contrary, Stukeley will put his Druids as nearly as possible on a level with the patriarchs. 'We cannot say that Jehovah appeared personally to them', he writes carefully, 'yet we may well think they were sometimes vouchsafed the spirit of prophecy, and particularly in regard to Messiah, who they knew was to be born of a virgin, and likewise was to be born at the winter solstice, whence their famous mistletoe solemnity'. While the rest of the world lapsed into idolatry, their temples remained the only monuments of the unpolluted patriarchal religion. 'Left in the extremest west to the improvement of their thoughts, [they] yet advanc'd their enquiries, under all disadvantages, to such heights, as should make our moderns asham'd to wink in the sunshine of learning and religion.' In short, as we survey the plates of Stonehenge, with Stukeley busy at his easel in the middle-distance and a travelling-chariot drawn up on the drover's road in the foreground, we may make the gratifying reflection 'that the true religion has chiefly, since the re-peopling of mankind after the flood, subsisted in our island; and here we made the best reformation from the universal pollution of Christianity, popery'. Patriotism can go no further.

At this point we may well ask: What has become of Andate, Goddess of Victory, and the other gods of the Celts? Stukeley's answer would be that this worship was imported by idolatrous colonies from the Continent, and this would be the line taken by anyone tender of the reputation of the Druids. Caesar had said that the Druids believed that their discipline came to them from Britain, and that those who wished to study it in its purity travelled thither. This statement makes possible the process by which all that is attractive in the accounts of the Gaulish Druids can be referred to Britain as its source, and all that is unattractive can be regarded as a Gaulish perversion of the true discipline. In particular, human sacrifice is very much played down, not only by the poets, who generally omit any reference to it, but by the antiquarians. We do not hear at all of the

<sup>1</sup> It acquired fresh vitality in the late eighteenth century from a school of mythologists, whose speculations, and their probable effect on the Romantic poets, are traced by Edward G. Hungerford in *Shores of Darkness* (1941). There is much about Druids here.

slaughterous basketry that has passed from Caesar into the lower school history books. Human sacrifice, we are reminded, was practised at times by the Romans themselves and by all nations of the ancient world. Everybody did it, in fact. Even so, Stukeley prefers to think that the Druids' participation in such an 'extravagant act of superstition deriv'd from some extraordinary notices they had of mankind's redemption: or perhaps from *Abraham's* example misunderstood'. Carte suggests that their originally bloodless rites were corrupted through the influence of Phoenician traders who 'being themselves furiously prepossessed in favour of human sacrifices, seem to have recommended them to a people extremely devoted to religion, and disposed to receive any rites that might express a higher veneration of their deities'—a sufficiently handsome apology. In Mason's verse play *Caractacus*, published ten years after Collins's ode, when the hard-pressed hero suggests to the Druid on Mona that the time has come to approach the gods with a human victim, he is sternly told that that sort of thing may happen across the Channel, but not in Britain, except where Britons have been 'mistaught by Gaul', and never on Mona. These anxious and ingenious explanations suggest strongly that barbarism was no part of the Druids' charm; it is against the imputation of barbarism that they are to be defended. Even Toland's juggling priests have nothing of the witch-doctor about them; they are nearer to the cynically enlightened prelates of the eighteenth century whom Protestant England conceived as presiding over the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood. Romance had not yet turned wistfully towards the barbaric, as it did towards the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The blood on the Druids' hands is not relished; it is an embarrassment. There is no dallying with fear. The sort of thrill that Lucan found in the dreadful druidical forest near Massilia may be faintly transmitted in Selden's allusion to 'such gloomy shadows, as they most usually for contemplation retired their ascending thoughts into'—though even here the thoughts 'ascend'—but it is not to be detected in Stukeley's 'verdant cathedrals', where the worship is fundamentally related to that in Stukeley's parish church. We do not therefore find that the virtues of the Druids are those of the noble savage; they are highly civilized and a little donnish. 'The collegiate life which the *Druids* led,' writes Carte, 'far from rendering them morose and awkward, served only to improve their

<sup>1</sup> The human sacrifice is then emphasized often to the exclusion of all other druidical customs; e.g. T. Warton's 'Sonnet written at Stonehenge' (publ. 1777) refers to 'druid priests, sprinkled with human gore'. This is Mrs. Barbauld's difficulty; she associates the Druid only with bloody rites: 'To the sanguinary and superstitious Druid, whose rites were wrapped up in mystery, it was peculiarly improper to compare a poet whose religion was simple as truth, sublime as nature, and liberal as the spirit of philosophy' (*op. cit.*). Wordsworth, also, includes the 'giant wicker' and the 'baleful rite' in his vision of the Druids (*Prelude*, XIII, 21-49, and *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, II and III), but to him they are also astronomers and musicians and, I think, monotheists. Shelley briefly denies the Druid a place in his progress of Liberty ('Ode to Liberty', Stanza VIII).



politeness, by daily conversations with persons of the same rank with themselves, whose minds, by their studies and reasonings on subjects of morality, were filled with noble sentiments; and who had added to their other accomplishments, a knowledge of all useful parts of learning.' They 'made Ethics a principal part of their study' and were wise lawgivers. 'Wherever they were not themselves a party,' writes Toland, with his usual comic wobble, 'neither the Egyptians, nor Persians nor Greeks, nor Romans, did surpass the wisdom, equity and strictness of the Druids in the sanction or execution of the laws.' Moreover they were men of peace, exempt from military service themselves and revered as mediators even by hostile troops on the battlefield, and this appealed strongly to the eighteenth-century intellectuals, to whom war was an irrational survival of barbarism.<sup>1 2</sup>

It remains to consider what Carte meant by ascribing to the Druids 'a knowledge of all useful parts of learning'. There is a Baconian flavour about the phrase, and it is observable that in the eighteenth century, though the function of the Druids as poets and historians is not forgotten, the accent falls heavily on their skill as natural philosophers. The importance of this for Collins's use of the name is obvious. There is ample basis for this conception in the classical writers. Caesar tells us that the Druids discussed the stars, their movements, the size of the universe and the earth, and the order of nature. Cicero records that Divitiacus the Aeduan claimed to have the knowledge of nature that the Greeks called 'physiologia'. Ammianus Marcellinus says that the Euhages, the seers, the second of the three orders of the learned, explained the high mysteries of

<sup>1</sup> Much of this glowing account of the virtues and graces of the Druids is traceable to the identification of Abaris the Hyperborean as a Hebridean Druid, argued by Toland, with great ingenuity and pertinacity, and accepted by Stukeley and Carte. Abaris, according to a legend recorded by numerous writers from Diodorus Siculus to Suidas, visited Greece and Sicily in the time of Pythagoras, was received by him as an equal, and won golden opinions everywhere. He is commonly considered a Scythian, but Toland maintains that the Hyperborean island (Diodorus Siculus, II, 47), which he distinguishes from the Hyperborean continent, was the Hebridean group. (The Loeb editors think it may have been the British Isles.) If Abaris was a Hebridean Celt, it might be assumed that he was a Druid. We hear that he spoke Greek perfectly, was eloquent, candid, moderate and sagacious, 'a searcher after wisdom, desirous of friendship', and favoured by Pythagoras beyond his other disciples. 'Can courts form a finer gentleman?' asks Carte. 'Can Greece or Rome boast of producing a man more extraordinary?' Toland, who leaves no stone unturned, translates *χλαμυδι σφγγρόμενος* 'wrapt in a plad (*sic*) . . . the native garb of an aboriginal Scot'. The next step was to presume that this paragon was the master, not the disciple, of Pythagoras. It also followed that, if the Hyperborean island was the Hebrides, then the Hyperborean embassies to Delos might have consisted of British Druids, who brought to Greece the doctrines of the immortality of the soul and of a future state of rewards and punishments. Carte, following Stukeley, pushes this assumption to its limits and asserts that it was from the Druids that the 'learned Greeks borrowed the best of their religious doctrines, and the first knowledge of those sciences, in which they became afterwards so eminent'. The equation of Virgil's golden bough with the druidical mistletoe establishes them in an equally important position in regard to Roman originals.

<sup>2</sup> The cause of national liberty alone hallowed it. To Thomson (*Summer*, II. 534-5) the patriot is: 'Backward to mingle in detested war, But foremost when engaged'.



nature. The very proficiency of the Druids in magic, which elicited reluctant blame from their admirers, was ascribed to their advanced knowledge of natural science, and Carte points out that their power to provide apparent miracles presumes a regular course of enquiry by judicious persons, extended over ages. Much was made of the connection with Pythagoras. Like him they taught the transmigration of souls, whether they derived the doctrine from the Greek sage or transmitted it to him. Stukeley ascribes to them 'a good notion of music', since 'Pythagoras completed this art'. They were mathematicians and astronomers, as the careful orientation of their stone circles seemed to prove. Stukeley, who spent much time analysing the symmetry of these monuments, assures us that they 'well understood the geometry of the circle', and that their structures were in exact relation to the quarters of Heaven. He can account for this precision only by assuming that they knew the use of the magnetic compass, and he speculates whether the sacred golden arrow, which Abaris presented to Pythagoras in return for his instruction, might not be the magnetic needle. Carte, finding in Diodorus Siculus's account of the Hyperborean island that there the moon could be seen at a small distance from the earth, with mountainous eminences on her face, jumps to the conclusion that they had telescopes. They were, indeed, completely equipped, adepts in physics, astronomy, mathematics, physiology and geography, equals or perhaps masters of the Greeks in philosophy, specially devoted to ethics, and 'really unblameable in all respects, except in what related to their sacrifices, divinations and superstitions'.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the conceptions of the Druids that were rife when Collins wrote his ode, and the presumption that he was affected by them does not depend upon establishing his acquaintance with the pages of Toland, Stukeley and Carte. He is likely enough to have looked at the last two. Stukeley and his enthusiasms were well known in the literary world of his time, and Carte's first volume was an impressive book and something of a landmark in the writing of history, from its full use of documents. There is, however, no evidence of Collins's direct indebtedness to these particular books, and no need of it. He had no archaeological axe to grind; his imagination, always captivated by the grand and remote, seized on the idealized figure of the Druid, as it hovered in the eighteenth century fancy, and explored its rich and complex applicability as a type of the dead poet. The figure, moreover, must have haunted his mind for years. It is true that the word 'Druid' occurs only twice in his poetry, in the ode in question and in the passage already quoted from the 'Ode to Liberty'. It does, however, occur in the poetry of his closest friend, Joseph Warton, and in that of the younger brother, Thomas Warton. At the end of Thomas

<sup>1</sup> See Carte.

Warton's *Pleasures of Melancholy*, written in 1745, the babe Contemplation is found by a Druid on his evening walk, 'far in a hollow glade of Mona's wood', and taken home 'to the close shelter of his oaken bower', where she lies 'listening to the rapid roar Of wood-hung Menai, stream of Druids old'. It is a fairly safe assumption that the Druid entered the imaginative world of the young Wartons from 'Lycidas' (ll. 50-5). It is this passage that Joseph Warton quotes later in his *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope* (vol. 1, section i, 1756) when he wants to point out the inferiority of Pope to Milton as an imitator of Theocritus. 'The mention of places, remarkably romantic, the supposed habitation of Druids, bards, and wizards', he writes, picking up each of the operative words in turn, 'is far more pleasing to the imagination, than the obvious introduction of Cam and Isis, as seats of the Muses.' Moreover, the Wartons were specially devoted to the minor poems of Milton, regarding them, as Professor Garrod says, as something of a family discovery. Joseph Warton has only one Druid in his *Odes on Various Subjects* (1746), the companion book to Collins's *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects* (1746) and he appears in a playful 'Ode to a Lady who Hates the Country'. In the earlier *Enthusiast*, substantially written in 1740, we hear of bards of old, who sought brown forests and pathless wilds to meet the Muse and learn 'the moral strains she taught to mend mankind', but though this is plainly in the druidical line, the word 'bard' must be examined. Druidical amateurs knew perfectly well that the order of Druids was three-fold, and consisted of Druids proper, who were priests and lawgivers, seers (Vates, Voids, Euhages) and bards who sang hymns to an instrument like the lyre; but they did not attempt, in poetry at any rate, to keep the distinction between the first and last classes. To Milton bards and Druids are synonymous ('where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie'), and in the eighteenth century every Druid can be referred to, if the verse requires it, as a bard. The synonymy, however, does not hold in inverse; 'bard' was already a word of wider connotation; a bard might be Chaucer or Numa Pompilius or a modern English rhymester.<sup>2</sup> We must not therefore lean too heavily on the word 'bard' in *The Enthusiast*, but content ourselves with noting, here and in the 'Ode to Fancy', that linking of the notions of poetry, nature and liberty, which Collins insists on and which he also found in Thomson. The same ideas persist in Thomas Warton's later odes; there are Druids, breathing their solemn songs in oaken bowers, in his 'Ode on the Marriage of the King' (1761) and a Druid harp, sounding to battle from the pro-

<sup>2</sup> Collins has 'old Runic bards', in his 'Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland'. These may be scalds, but are more likely, in view of their 'uncouth lyres . . . many-coloured vest' and 'matted hair with boughs fantastic crown'd' to be Celtic, i.e. Druids, in which case 'Runic' joins the vague romantic vocabulary, and means no more than mysterious, sacred and antique.

found gloom of hoary forests, with baffled Caesar fleeing to gain an easier triumph at Pharsalia, in his 'Ode on his Majesty's Birthday, June 4th, 1788'. These passages are too late for our immediate purpose, but they confirm the likelihood that the Druid was an important figure in the imaginations of the Wartons and their friends.

The special feature of the Wartons' dealings with Druids (and this is important in connection with Collins's application of the word to Thomson) is their strong romantic emphasis on the wild natural setting in which the Druid functions. The fact was not new. It had been known that the Druids worshipped in groves, where they cut the sacred mistletoe. The very name Druid was held to derive from  $\delta\rho\upsilon\varsigma$ , an oak, and Stukeley turns away from his stone circles long enough to remind us that 'their verdant cathedrals, as we may call them, are celebrated by all old writers'. But this had hitherto been a matter of secondary importance, less interesting than their patriotism, their theology or their mathematics. To the Wartons it was primary. It was from the woods that the Druids received their inspiration. It is in the woods that Contemplation is nourished. From nature or from some embodiment of nature, nymph or genius, come ecstasy, moral enlightenment, love of man and the wisdom of a governor.<sup>1</sup> Poets of all periods have received this inspiration, and the Druids first among them. The Druid as a scientist and mathematician does not appear to have interested the Wartons.

From the enthusiasms of the friends of Collins's formative years it is proper to turn to the friend of his manhood, and ask what Thomson himself makes of the word 'Druid'. Affection pays tribute most gladly in words that have a special significance for the hearer, and, if the ear of the friend is closed, the use of this language has a poignant satisfaction for the survivor. Thomson uses the word Druid twice. The passage from *Liberty* has been cited. The word appears in *The Castle of Indolence* in an interesting context. The Knight of Arts and Industry, who destroys the castle and releases the captives, is accompanied by a 'bard' who is described as 'a little Druid wight Of withered aspect'. The word is vague; but from what follows, it must connote mystery and exalted authority, inhabiting here an unlikely physical form. The deepest moral and religious counsels are in his mouth. It is he who wakes the indolent, and sings to his 'British harp' of God immanent in nature and of the chain of being, leading up through nature to nature's God.<sup>2</sup> He is a sacred poet and utters something

<sup>1</sup> *The Enthusiast* and *The Pleasures of Melancholy* are here attuned to—and may well have taken their note from—Thomson, *Summer* (ll. 516–63).

<sup>2</sup> *Castle of Indolence*, xxxiii, xxxvi, xlvi–lxiii. In this respect the 'Druid wight' differs from the Druid proper and the 'Arch-Druid' Pythagoras. It is interesting that in his passage on Pythagoras (*Liberty* iii, ll. 31–70) Thomson regrets that the sage stopped short at metempsychosis:—

of Thomson's essential creed. He might be called a natural priest, but that Thomson, who in the fourth book of *Liberty* fulminates much against Superstition and the temporal power of the Church, would not use so compromising a word. If, as seems likely, the little wight of withered aspect, ennobled by this sacred power, is Thomson's friend, Pope, we have the interesting suggestion that a playful compliment, paid by one poet to another, is remembered by a third when the first is dead, and paid back with mournful deliberation. Or Collins, whose memory seems to have been bad, may not have remembered, and yet the seed may have germinated.

There are no Druids in the *Seasons*, but it is there that Thomson is most 'druidical'. To take the most obvious aspect first, the aspect to which the friend of the Wartons would be most sensitive, Thomson appears here as specially the poet of the groves. His poetry is full of woodland scenery from the 'sunny glades' and 'solemn oaks' of *Spring* to the 'mid-wood shade', 'the awful listening gloom' of the 'woodland quire' in *Summer* and the 'mournful grove and vast embowering shades' of *Autumn*;¹ and three times² he traces how, in such a setting, the love of nature glows into ecstasy, and revelation and inspiration descend upon the poet. To describe this state he calls on his strongest terms—rapture, divine astonishment—and his boldest conceptions. The wanderers in the woodland 'feel the present Deity, and taste the joy of God'. In these 'haunts of meditation', where the 'ancient bards the inspiring breath Ecstatic felt', and conversed with 'angels and immortal forms' who prompted the poet's muse to 'better themes', the modern bard has the same experience.

Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky,  
A thousand shapes or glide athwart the dusk  
Or stalk majestic on. Deep-roused, I feel  
A sacred terror, a severe delight  
Creep through my mortal frame.

Or the visitation may come in the shape of 'Philosophic Melancholy', piercing the heart with virtuous pangs and inflaming the imagination, so

He taught that life's indissoluble flame,  
From brute to man, and man to brute again,  
For ever shifting runs the eternal round . . . . .  
. . . . . Delightful truth!  
Had he beheld the living chain ascend,  
And not a circling form, but rising whole.

Most eighteenth-century writers on Druids (e.g. Stukeley) make no distinction between the Pythagorean metempsychosis and the druidical belief in the return of the soul to another human frame. Thomson may have done so, but his language (cf. *Liberty*, iv, ll. 627-33) is vague. Pope deals with the chain of being in the *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, but does not link to it the ascent of the individual soul, as Thomson seems to do in *Liberty* and *Winter* ll. 603-8, though not in the *Castle of Indolence*. There seems to be in Thomson's mind a loose association of the notions Druids—Pythagoras—metempsychosis—chain of being—Pope, which holds together, but will not stand pressure.

¹ *Spring*, ll. 893, 915; *Summer*, ll. 9, 518, 521; *Autumn*, ll. 990, 1030.

² *Spring*, ll. 893-903; *Summer*, ll. 516-63; *Autumn*, ll. 988-1036.

that, while 'ten thousand thousand fleet ideas . . . crowd fast into the mind's creative eye', the emotional nature, similarly quickened, streams forth in love and benevolence to the human race. Nor are the woods congenial only to the solitary ecstatic. To their 'verdant portico, . . . nature's vast Lyceum', the poet walks in the evening with philosophic friends, 'improving and improved'. Like that of the Druids, his philosophic interest is strongly directed to the workings of the physical world. His special care for insect-life is modern, but the magnificent address to the sun<sup>1</sup> as the 'great delegated source of life and light' occupies what was believed to be druidical ground, and so do the passages on stars and comets.<sup>2</sup> His philosophic range is summed up in the appeal to all-sufficient Nature in the last lines of *Autumn*, where he prays to be instructed in the 'rolling wonders' of Heaven, 'their motions, periods, and their laws', in the mineral strata of the deep, the vegetable world, the more complex system of animals, and finally the workings of the mind of man, while such passages as those on the source of water and the nature of frost,<sup>3</sup> together with fervent addresses to 'awful Newton' and Bacon, 'the great deliverer',<sup>4</sup> prove how important a part of Thomson's love of nature was the intellectual satisfaction of knowing how it worked, rising to ecstatic wonder at the Great Designer. In all these passages, moreover, he is aware of himself as one of a little advance-guard of enlightenment. While the 'fond sequacious herd' tremble at the portent of the comet, 'the enlightened few whose God-like minds philosophy exalts' triumph in their power to forecast its path.<sup>5</sup> The Druids also were an enlightened few, a select body of sages, equipped with learning far above the reach of the common man, though ultimately beneficial to him, and it is in this way that Thomson thinks of the philosophers of his age and of the poets who are tutored by philosophy. The friends who walk in the woods of a summer's evening and those 'of pliant soul, Or blithe or solemn, as the theme inspired', who pass the winter-glooms in converse in some deep retirement, are—and are well aware they are—superior minds, 'to those exulting eye a fairer world, Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse, Displays its charms'.<sup>6</sup> Like Caesar's Druids, they hold discussions touching the order of nature and the immortality of the soul, and if the words 'and the strength and power of the immortal gods' require some adaptation to fit this philosophical circle, it is not much. Thomson was on the whole rather less Christian than Stukeley believed the Druids to have been. In all his rapturous worship of the great Creative Spirit of the Universe, the 'Source of Being, Universal

<sup>1</sup> *Summer*, ll. 90-174.

<sup>2</sup> *Summer*, ll. 1693-1729; *Autumn*, ll. 1088-137.

<sup>3</sup> *Autumn*, ll. 736-835; *Winter*, ll. 714-31.

<sup>4</sup> *Spring*, l. 208; *Summer*, ll. 1535-50.

<sup>5</sup> *Summer*, ll. 1710-29; and cf. *Spring*, ll. 208-17; and *Autumn*, ll. 1115-37.

<sup>6</sup> *Summer*, ll. 1386-8; *Winter*, ll. 572-608.



Soul Of heaven and earth, Essential Presence',<sup>1</sup> there is no specifically Christian expression though the Christian ideal of love is everywhere present. To complete the 'druidical' qualities of the *Seasons* we have only to recall Thomson's glowing enthusiasm for liberty—'all-protecting freedom which alone Sustains the name and dignity of man'—and his grave moral counsel; his muses are 'humanizing' and teach

The godlike wisdom of the tempered breast,  
Progressive truth, the patient force of thought,  
Investigation calm whose silent powers  
Command the world, the light that leads to Heaven,  
Kind equal rule, the government of laws—<sup>2</sup>

and the whole train of social and moral virtues. Liberty, truth, and love of human kind are the stars by which he steers, and his whole poem is bathed in their light.

It was not unnatural, then, or even far-fetched, for Collins to see in Thomson the modern Druid. The poet-priest of nature, the patriot glorifying liberty, the devout enthusiast of a benevolent Creative Spirit, whom he would not attempt to define dogmatically, the hymn-maker, (there are many in the *Seasons*), the believer in the immortality of the soul, the student and teacher of natural philosophy, the moral sage—he embodied in a modern form almost all the characteristics of the idealized Druids of contemporary conceptions. He had, moreover, a fervent enthusiasm, a quality of genuine awe and wonder which, civilized and enlightened as it was, might seem to relate him to ancient bards and seers. The gloom of his woods is neither Gothic nor elegiac; it is something deeper and older. Of all the druidical characteristics that are patient of modern dress (for we may discount stone circles and human sacrifice) only one salient trait is missing from his work; he makes no use of anything resembling the symbolic and enigmatical language in which the Druids couched their teaching, and which they were held to derive from Pythagoras. The literary fashions of the time were dead against obscurity, and the enlightened few were anxious to impart, in the clearest way, any instruction to which the sequacious herd would open its ears.

There remains a small textual point which gains new significance when connected with eighteenth-century druidical lore. In Fawkes's *Poetical Calendar* and Pearch's *Collection* the first line of the *Ode occasion'd by the Death of Mr. Thomson* runs 'In yonder grove a Druid lies'. Most editors reproduce the original version, as printed by Manby and Cox, but R. A. Willmott in *Poems of Gray, Parnell, Collins and T. Warton* (1854) makes a plea for the revision on the grounds that it is more accordant with the notion of a Druid, and that the speaker, being in a boat, does not see the

<sup>1</sup> *Spring*, ll. 556-7.

<sup>2</sup> *Summer*, ll. 875-83.

grave itself but the elms and chestnuts on the river bank. Neither reason is conclusive. Collins was not much concerned with topographical accuracy, as the 'whitening spire' of Richmond Church<sup>1</sup> proves. As for the burial of Druids in their sacred groves, I have not found this anywhere mooted, though it is a likely enough flight of fancy. However, the emendation is not to be dismissed lightly. It does deepen the druidical colouring, and obviates the unpleasing repetition of the vowel sound and the word itself in the rhymes of the second and fourth lines of the first stanza. On the other hand, it weakens the poetical shock of the first line and confuses the position of the musing Briton in the last; if he is standing near enough to the grave to see the stone and mound, he could hardly refer to 'yonder grove', though he might to 'yonder grave'. The poem is beautiful but not flawless, and the reader must decide which flaw he can best put up with. Probably Collins himself, that anxious reviser, remained undecided.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mrs. Barbauld, *op. cit.* 'The church of Richmond is not white nor a spire, nor can it be seen from the river; and as to the monument erected in the last verse to this great Poet, it must be looked upon in the light of a prophecy which is not yet fulfilled.' Sir Harris Nicolas in his *Memoir* of Thomson (Aldine edition, 1847) says: 'He was buried in Richmond Church under a plain stone without any inscription.'

## MRS. PIOZZI'S OMISSIONS FROM JOHNSON'S LETTERS TO THRALES<sup>1</sup>

By R. W. CHAPMAN

When Mrs. Piozzi, in 1788, published most of the letters from Johnson to members of the Thrale family that were in her control,<sup>2</sup> she allowed herself, following the practice of her age, a wide editorial discretion. Thus she suppressed, in whole or in part, a great many proper names. This was in almost all cases, perhaps in all, a natural and proper discretion. She was rightly anxious not to give pain to others, and naturally reluctant to disclose certain intimacies of sickness, childbirth, and domestic finance. If she was criticized at the time, it was probably for the opposite fault of leaving initials that were too easily interpreted. Even when she removed a name entirely, the solution must often have leaped to the eye of her well-informed readers.

But Mrs. Piozzi used her discretion in other and larger ways. She omitted entirely a substantial proportion of the letters at her disposal. The collection of 1788 contains, if I have counted right, 322 letters to Thrales. I have copies or records of some 85 others. Of these she at one time intended to include some half-dozen; they were set up, and proofs of them are bound in a copy of the book which belonged to Samuel Lysons, its virtual editor, and belongs to Lord Harmsworth. They were cancelled as of minor interest, perhaps to make room for something else. Most of the others, too, are short and unimportant.

There are two outstanding exceptions. The first is one of the letters acquired in 1931 by the John Rylands Library, and published in its *Bulletin* for 1932. This remarkable letter has no date, is written in French,<sup>3</sup> and seems to be studiously enigmatic. Whatever its precise purport, it is clearly a document that Johnson would not have wished her to publish, and she did right to withhold it.

The other exception is the penultimate letter of the long series (Hill 970), the letter of 2 July 1784 which begins 'If I interpret your letter

<sup>1</sup> I use these abbreviations: HT=Henry Thrale; HLT=Hester Lynch Thrale; HLP=Hester Lynch Piozzi.

<sup>2</sup> These included some to her husband and a few to her daughters Susan and Sophia. Queeney declined to let hers be printed. HLP did not appropriate Susan's and Sophia's; Susan's like Queeney's own descended to Queeney's only daughter and are now at Bowood; see the sixth Lord Lansdowne's *Johnson and Queeney*, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> There are one or two other short letters or notes in French; but these are light in tone.

right, you are ignominiously married'. Neither her self-respect nor her respect for Johnson's memory could well allow her to print this letter. It is to her credit that she did not destroy it; it remained in the family till 1918.

Between these extremes of total omission and minor omissions lies a third and more interesting class: that of silent omission of parts of letters. By modern editorial standards this is always a crime; the scholarly conscience demands that if we may not have the complete text we shall have dots. Boswell, so far as we know, was punctilious in indicating omissions. Boswell was far in advance of his age. But the evidence for his practice is inconclusive. He had as a rule no motive for editing Johnson's letters to others. From Johnson's letters to himself he made frequent omissions, stating usually that a passage omitted 'related to a private transaction' or the like. In one or two places he gallantly confesses suppression of passages reflecting severely on himself. But of these letters only two are known to have survived.

On one occasion Boswell was guilty of an undisclosed verbal change. He was not allowed to print the full text of Johnson's letter to Burney of 4 September, 1784. Burney, like Percy and Reynolds in like cases, was unwilling to disclose that Johnson had written the dedication to his book on the Handel celebration. That the reticence was Burney's is clear from the manuscript, which is endorsed, 'Fragment of a Letter—The main part not being intelligible'. The words omitted by Boswell are erased in the original. They are legible, and though rather obscure are not 'unintelligible'; they refer to the dedication. The omission put Boswell in a difficulty, which he solved as best he could. The sentence which he printed thus: 'I am delighted by finding that our opinions are the same' actually ended thus: 'that You like so well what I have done'. This makes Johnson write something not strictly true. But I do not take a grave view of Boswell's fib; he had to serve two masters.

By the standards of 1788, then, we are not to consider undisclosed omission as a crime, unless we can prove malice or distortion of the sense. I open my case with evidence of both. The original of Johnson's letter from Lichfield of 19 June, 1775 (No. 114 in 1788, 408 in Hill) is in the Birthplace at Lichfield. When I first saw it I noticed that the passage that begins 'Your dissertation upon Queeney' and ends 'when we meet' is no part of this letter but is a scrap of another letter pasted over something which, therefore, was not printed. I was allowed to remove the superstructure (a painless operation) and then had two things to do. The first was to restore the text of 408. This was not easy, for HLP had used her erasing pen before she thought of a more rigorous blackout. It was read, however, and proved to be in praise of Boswell.

'Do you read Boswell's Journals? He moralized, and found my faults, and laid them up to reproach me. Boswell's narrative is very natural, and therefore very entertaining, he never made any scruple of shewing it to me. He is a very fine fellow'.

My next task was to read the verso of the *dissertation* fragment, which I call 408a. This yielded results which were of interest to me as editor, but do not now concern me as prosecutor. What does concern me in that capacity is the question, What became of the rest of 408a? I have not found the mutilated manuscript. I think I know, approximately, when it was written, and I think I can identify the document in 1788 which represents what was left of it when the *dissertation* and its verso had been removed; but that is another story. I return to 408.

The omission of the praises of Boswell was clearly malicious. I do not think it amounts to distortion. If we condone any silent omission, we must grant her within her rights, though we shall not think the better of her for exercising them. The interpolation, on the other hand, I think does amount to perversion. The *junctura* is *callida* enough, the result plausible. But it makes a whole which is not Johnson's whole, and imposes on him a train of thought which might not be natural to him. But it is a nice point. Mason went so far as to concoct a 'letter' out of five of Gray's real letters. But he had the prudence to cover his traces, where he could, by destroying the originals.<sup>1</sup>

In the letter to Bath of 18 May, 1776 (Hill 482, 152 in 1788) Johnson is made to write: 'B—— went away on Thursday night . . . He paid another visit, I think, to ●●●, before he went home'. The original is untraced, and we owe the true text to Lysons: 'to Mrs. Rudd before he went home to his own Deary'. Here even the ranks of Tuscany are constrained to applaud Mrs. Piozzi's magnanimity. She had Boswell at her mercy, and spared him.

I deal with other omissions in chronological sequence (with the numbers in 1788 following Hill's).

235 (134) July [1770] from Lichfield.

HLP placed this letter among those of 1775. Hill described this as 'careless'; but he had not seen the manuscript, in which the day (in July) and the year have been erased with a knife. There is also an erasure, at the end of the letter, of two lines, so effective that I failed to read any of it. For the false date I can give no reason. It *was* careless of HLP to leave the words 'I hope . . . Lucy begins to walk'; for attentive readers might remember that Lucy was Johnson's god-daughter, who was born in 1769 and died in 1773.

<sup>1</sup> See Whibley's Introduction to *The Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, ed. P. Toynbee and L. Whibley, vol. 1, pp. xiv-xv.



236 (26) 20 July 1770 from Ashbourne.

The postscript 'Here are Strawberries' is omitted. 235 is full of strawberries, the strawberries of Streatham and of Lichfield. But HLP having divorced that letter from those of 1770 might think the postscript pointless. But see note on 259.

253 (33) 25 June 1771 from Lichfield.

HLP suppresses a short paragraph about a remedy that had been proposed for Mrs. Salusbury's cancer.

254 (34) 3 July 1771 from Ashbourne.

HLP suppresses the last paragraph, which contemplates the birth of a child.

255 (35) 7 July from Ashbourne.

HLP suppresses remarks on strawberries, Taylor's talk of killing a buck, and remedies suggested for Mrs. Salusbury.

258 (38) 10 July 1771 from Ashbourne.

The first paragraph is suppressed, for the same reason as the last of 254.

259 (39) 15 July 1771 from Ashbourne.

HLP suppresses the concluding sentence, 'This day we had no strawberries'—as trivial? Cf. 236.

260 (40) 17 July 1771 from Ashbourne.

Of the concluding sentence, 'Rheumatism teazes me yet, but Dr. Taylor is got well', HLP prints the first four words only; one wonders why.

265 (44) 31 July 1771 from Lichfield. To Henry Thrale.

HLP suppresses the concluding sentence, asking HT to frank an enclosure.

311 (71) 24 May 1773.

HLP suppresses two passages:

- (1) 'I am glad that you made no struggle to dine with the Clerks. I hope my Master will have no unpleasant work at his Restes.'
- (2) Johnson undertakes 'to talk, as occasions offer, to my Master'. Johnson thinks 'he will, by degrees, calculate his expences, and by his calculation regulate his p(riuations)' (the word is doubtful). HLP reduces 'my Master' to asterisks, and suppresses the rest.

The first passage hints at a domestic difference. Both concern the arcana of the brewery.

- 318 (73) 12 August 1773 from Newcastle, with a PS. written at Edinburgh (the main letter and the PS. are now separated by the Atlantic Ocean). HLP is guilty of a doublet. She prints the PS., which ends 'I run pretty well'. But she also interpolates, at the end of the original letter, a PS. 'I am pretty well'. My guess is that she first (1) misread the PS.; the word is 'run', but might easily be misread 'am'; (2) chose the last sentence for publication; later (3) thought better of it and sent the whole of the PS. to the printer, forgetting her extract. The MS. of the main letter is now three leaves; the PS., now a narrow strip, may have been (part of) the fourth leaf.
- 321 (75) 25 August 1773 from Bamff.  
In the passage which answers HLT's letter received at Aberdeen, after the word 'pleasing' (p. 233 in Hill), HLP suppresses a few sentences about the affairs of the brewery and her financial relations with her uncle Sir Thomas Salusbury.
- 324 (78) 14 September 1773 from Skye.  
HLP suppresses the postscript, in which Johnson gives an address in Edinburgh. Her tendency to omit postscripts may be related to her (almost invariable) reduction of the formal conclusion to an 'etc.'.
- 327 (80) 24 September 1773 from Skye.  
A small piece of editing (p. 259 in Hill): Johnson wrote 'though all who supped did not dance, some danced of the young people who did not sup'. 1788 improves 'sup' to 'come to supper'. So in 329 (81), p. 270 in Hill, HLP has altered 'observable' to 'worthy of observation'.
- 331 (83) 15 October 1773 from Mull.  
HLP suppresses the concluding sentence, which refers to her as 'now near a dangerous time'.
- 332 (84) 23 October 1773 from Inverary.  
Johnson wrote (Hill, p. 282) 'One of the ladies played-on her harpsichord, and I believe Boswell danced with the other'. HLP prints 'Boswell and Col danced a reel with the other'. The details of the reel are not in the published *Tour*; but they are in Boswell's journal, which she had read. Probably she made notes at the time.
- 333 (85) 23 October 1773 to HT from Inverary.  
At the end of the first paragraph, after 'Skie', a line is heavily erased. All I could read was 'because I suspect that she will'. Perhaps his suspicion was that she would demand such a poetical tribute as this ode to 'Thralia dulcis'.
- 390 (100) 12 May 1775.  
A short paragraph is omitted (near the middle) about Mrs. Gardiner, and Mrs. Williams's pimples.

393 (101) 20 May 1775.

The postscript about 'disputing against toleration' is pasted to the manuscript, and may come from another letter.

397 (103) 25 May 1775.

The original is mutilated at both top and bottom of the single leaf of which it consists. At least two lines (probably not much more) were first erased with the pen, later cut away.

415 (121) 6 July 1775 from Ashbourne.

In the second paragraph HLP was in two minds. Johnson had written 'I am glad you have read Boswel's Journal'. The last two words are very heavily erased; but on a piece of paper pasted over the erasure she has written 'Boswell's journal'. On removing this I was able to read 'Boswel's' clearly.

At the end she has suppressed a rather long paragraph on the question whether her estate should or should not be settled on her children: a question on which there might be a domestic difference.

418 (124) 12 July 1775 from Ashbourne. An unimportant postscript omitted.

419 (127) 13 July 1775 from Ashbourne.

The penultimate paragraph about the hay harvest is erased but marked *stet*. HLP was sensitive about references to the price of malt, which depended on the barley harvest. Perhaps she erased this passage in haste and restored it, seeing that hay was a harmless subject.

420 (128) 15 July 1775 from Ashbourne.

The penultimate paragraph, about her estate (see on 415), is marked for deletion but restored with a *stet*. It refers to his previous remarks, but does not mention HT and has no hint of a family dispute.

423 (131) 21 July 1775 from Ashbourne.

Three paragraphs are erased but restored by *stet*: (1) a reference to bleeding; (2) 'I am glad you read Boswel's journal' etc.; (3) her choice of Johnson and Cator as trustees.

There is also a more interesting suppression of which she did *not* repent. Johnson had written: 'You were but five and twenty when I knew you first, and you are now ——' (*sic*, Johnson's dash). In 1788 this sentence ends at 'first' (HLP's note on her own copy is 'But two or three and twenty').

426 (135) 29 July 1775 from Lichfield.

Two short paragraphs are suppressed. In the first he writes: 'Lucy may thank you if she will (Lucy Porter, to whom HLT had sent a present), but you shall have no thanks from me, for Wisdom—and critical

eruptions—and advanced life—such Stuf'. He adds 'I have burnt the letter'. The second paragraph refers to the profits of the brewery and the repayment of a loan.

477 (148) 11 May 1776.

There is a very small omission in the passage about dining with Langton.

479 (150) 16 May 1776.

There was a contemporary charge of faking the original to buttress a misprint. Johnson had mentioned 'Mrs. Knowles the Quaker that works the futile pictures'. So 1788; but it was clear enough that Johnson had written 'sutile' (his initial *s* is always long). Michael Lort alleged that in the original, which he had seen, 'it plainly appeared that a dash had been put across the long *s*, perhaps by the printer or corrector of the press'. I have seen only a photostat; the cross-bar does not look original.

537 (167) 13 August 1777 from Lichfield.

At the end of the first paragraph Johnson digresses to ask for a book (see 536). The sentence is erased, but I read it: '—'s — I think, is in the Library in one volume in large octavo. It never was printed but once'. Why this should be deleted—the name of the book irrevocably—passes understanding.

560 (190) 29 October 1777 from Lichfield.

After 'grow worse' a short paragraph is suppressed: 'Last year you saved 14000 l', and references to repayment of money borrowed from Lady Lade and her son.

586 (194) 31 October 1778.

'Your debts you may pay—much you may lay up.' So 1788. In the manuscript a strip about half a line long has been pasted over what follows 'pay', and HLP has written on it 'much'. The first letter of the suppressed words has escaped, and looks like 'I' perhaps Johnson wrote 'I know not how much' or the like.

616 (202) 29 November from Lichfield. At the end of the penultimate paragraph a sentence is suppressed: 'I find that Dr. Vyse talks here of Miss Streatfield.' HLP was perhaps still a little jealous of the lovely and accomplished Sophia, who had flirted with Thrale.

640 (217) 28 October 1779 to Brighton.

Two sentences are omitted, about entailing the Oxfordshire estate.

666 (234) 9 May 1780 to Bath.

A short paragraph is suppressed at the end, in which Johnson asked her to be polite to Mrs. Strahan 'if she comes in your way'. The

suppression of Mrs. Strahan here and in 686, 877 is no doubt connected with the fact that Strahan was the printer of 1788. Mrs. Strahan's visit to Bath is not mentioned in *Thraliana*; perhaps HLT failed to take notice of her.

669 (235) 23 May 1780 to Bath.

The letter opens with 'good news': 'Mr. Thrale well, Queeney good, — pleasing and welcome'. 1788 omits what follows 'good'. The blank has been plausibly filled with 'Burney', but the friend who collated the letter for me could read nothing under a blot. Perhaps the blot is original; if so, HLP might cancel 'pleasing and welcome' as meaningless.

718 (258) 7 April 1781 to Brighton. At the end of the first paragraph, about his loss in Thrale's death, half a line is erased.

725 (263) 16 April 1781.

A paragraph is omitted which discusses a proposal that Perkins should receive commissions on the profits of the brewery.

727. (263) 17 April 1781. Half a line is erased and is illegible.

747. (272) 10 November 1781 from Ashbourne.

'Dr. Taylor lives on Milk, and grows every day better, and is not wholly without hope of Lincoln'; that is, of the vacant deanery. HLP, who liked Taylor, very goodnatureedly omits 'of Lincoln', and damns the consequent ambiguity.

749 (274) 14 November 1781 from Ashbourne.

'We do not hear that the deanery is yet given away.' Lysons notes 'of Lincoln'. The letter is untraced, so we cannot tell if Lysons is supplying a lacuna or merely adding a note from his own knowledge. See on 747.

963 (350) 31 May 1784 to Bath.

After the last sentence as printed in 1788, 'Think of me, if You can, with tenderness', nearly a line is so erased that I could make nothing of it.

The letters printed in 1788 fall into three classes. A majority of them have been traced, and I have seen them. These I have discussed above, I believe (for the present purpose) almost if not quite exhaustively. A smaller but substantial number is still untraced of letters which are, however, known to have survived 1788 and to have been sold, either in the great *diaspora* at Sotheby's on 30 January, 1918 or on smaller occasions. The third class comprises ten letters of which I have no trace since 1788,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. L. Clifford reminds me that in 1823 Sir John Salusbury sold nine letters, which are not identified in the sale catalogue. It does, however, tell us that of the nine 'some' were in French. If some means only two, not more than seven of the nine can be any of my ten. I agree, however, with Mr. Clifford that destruction by HLP is intrinsically unlikely; she was a born magpie, and she had a real reverence for memorials of Johnson.



and which there is therefore some slight presumption that she destroyed. It is possible that they survive in some Piozzian *cache* in the fastnesses of Wales, or that they were dispersed in some way of which we have no record;<sup>1</sup> but I do not think this very likely.

I give the numbers of these letters in Hill and in 1788, with their dates:

338 (91) 12 November 1773 from Edinburgh.

A letter of consolation on the disappointment caused by Sir Thomas Salusbury's will. Sir Thomas is not named, but the reference is clear to a disappointing will; 'I never had much hope of a will in your favour'.

405 (111) 11 June 1775 from Lichfield.

'You never told me, and I omitted to enquire, how you were entertained by Boswell's Journal. One would think the man had been hired to be a spy upon me. He was very diligent, and caught opportunities of writing from time to time.'<sup>2</sup>

414 (120) from Ashbourne. HLP prints no date; but she places this letter between his letters of 1 and 6 July, 1775, and the internal evidence confirms this. If I am right in suspecting that the 1788 text is what remained of the letter when the *dissertation* (408a, see above) had been removed, then HLP had not far to seek for a scrap of the size required to hide the praises of Boswell. My evidence is the verso of the *dissertation*, which, though made partly illegible by HLP's paste, allows me to read the names of Langton, Shakespeare, and Liz. Now we know from HLT's unpublished letter of 29 June, 1775 (in the Rylands Library) that she was anxious to buy a horse Lizard from a poor man who could not afford his keep, and wondered if Taylor would have him. Johnson replies (408a) that the only vacant place 'is in the possession of . . . Shakespeare', an old racehorse, and suggests that Liz. be sent to Langton in Lincolnshire.

545 (172) 13 September 1777 from Ashbourne.

'Boswell . . . shrinks from the Baltick expedition . . . it is a pity he has not a better bottom.'

547 (173) 15 September 1777 from Ashbourne.

'Last night came Boswell. I am glad that he is come. He seems to be very brisk and lively, and laughs a little at \*\*\*\*.'

662 (229) 25 April 1780 to Bath.

'Mr. E—— and Mr. P——' had called on Johnson to criticize the letter which HLT proposed to address to the electors of Southwark,

<sup>1</sup> HLP gave away, I think, several of the letters. She gave 324 to her young protégé, W. A. Conway, in 1820.

<sup>2</sup> Hill suspected HLP of forging this; I see no reason for any suspicion.

explaining that HT was too ill to make an appearance. Johnson concurs: 'You had mentioned his sickness in terms which give his adversaries advantage'. There is also a sentence about the diet prescribed for HT ('starving').

663 (230) 1 May 1780 to Bath.

'Mr. Thrale never will live abstinently, till he can persuade himself to abstain by rule.'

703 (256) 25 August 1780 to Bath.

HT's illness: 'The swelling of his legs has nothing in it dangerous'.

749 (274) 14 November 1781 from Ashbourne. Praise of the Burneys.

906 (329) 20 November 1783 to Bath.

Sophia Thrale's incommunicative taciturnity'.

Of these letters only 414 is intrinsically suspect. It is suspect, if only because Johnson is very unlikely to have written such a letter—a full-dress letter from a distance—without dating it. The other letters deal indeed with delicate topics—illness, finance, and Boswell. But they deal with them so frankly that there is no positive reason to suspect suppression. It remains true that when Johnson wrote so much, he may have written more. The only letter that seems to touch on no delicate topic is 749. The possibility occurs that HLT may have given this letter to Dr. Burney or to Fanny.<sup>1</sup>

If any conclusion emerges from the consideration of these letters, it is a flimsy structure. The external evidence raises a certain presumption that the originals have perished, perhaps by deliberate destruction in 1788. The nature of the letters, as known from the printed texts, supplies a possible motive for destruction.

One line of inquiry seems to remain. Some of Mrs. Thrale's unpublished letters (now in the Rylands Library) to Johnson are known by their dates or otherwise<sup>2</sup> to be answers to letters from him which are in 1788. Are there, in her letters, any passages which seem to call for passages in his which we do not find in the 1788 texts? This is, of course, an idle question for the letters of which we have the originals; it applies only to the letters which—whether they are or are not known to have survived 1788—are still untraced.

On 16 May 1776 Johnson wrote to Mrs. Thrale at Bath complaining of her silence; 'I hope you are not angry, or sick'. She replied in a letter of the same date, which was no doubt the basis at least of her published letter,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Percy Scholes, who has made a very thorough study of the Burneys, does not know of any such gift.

<sup>2</sup> Many of them are undated, or incompletely dated, or (slightly) misdated.

No. 151 in 1788, dated 16 May. This explained her silence. Johnson replied in 482 of 18 May: 'Then you are neither sick nor angry'. The letter was sold in 1918, but has not been traced since. As printed in 1788 it is a short letter, and may be briefly summarized: Queeney must keep her promise of writing. He has heard of them from Seward. He has been to Southwark; Perkins boasts that 'we shall double our business', and is buying malt in large quantities at thirty and sixpence. Taylor's legal business detains Johnson, who however hopes to come to Bath next week. Boswell left on Thursday. He visited Mrs. Rudd again (HLP suppressed the name; see above, p. 19). 'He carries with him two or three good resolutions; I hope they will not mould upon the road.' Who is this new friend of mine? (a wild Irishman, described as Johnson's adorer, but not named, in hers of 16 May). He sends some powders 'lest you should lose your patient by delay'. The letter she has sent him was from Twisse, and the book, if any come, is his travels, which he hopes she will 'unt y and read'.

She replied in an unpublished letter of 21 May. Believing him to be already on the road she describes her letter as probably useless; and this no doubt explains its inadequacy as a reply. She says nothing of his visit to Southwark, nothing of Queeney, nothing of Boswell's resolutions, nothing of Twiss, nothing of the powders. On the other hand her letter contains a passage which, as a reply to his letter as she published it, may be redundant: 'I had a better claim [i.e. than Taylor's] to a larger Estate, which I had been longer nursed up in the hopes of'; but the disappointment is over now, and the price of malt has ceased to interest her. It rather looks as if Johnson's letter had contained a reference to the old grievance of Sir Thomas Salusbury's will. If it did, the omission is one of which we need not complain.

486 is another letter not heard of since 1918. In 1788, on which we therefore depend, it is dated only 'June 4, at night'; but its place in 1788 implies that it belongs to 1776, and that seems certain from its content. It is a short letter, mainly on the question whether his gout will allow him to 'climb into a coach' for Bath. But it opens with a puzzle: 'I am not sincerely sorry that . . . you are going to be immediately a mother. Compose your thoughts, diversify your attention, and attend your health'. She had said no such thing in any extant letter, and indeed she hardly can have said any such thing; Mr. Clifford finds from the 'Children's Book' that she first suspected it at the end of June. Whatever Johnson's misunderstanding, he cannot have thought the event 'immediate' in the sense of 'imminent'. If the word was correctly read by the printer of 1788, it may mean 'without an interval'. There was in fact an unusually long

interval between the births of Frances, 4 May, 1775, and Cecilia, 8 February, 1777. Still, he might mean that, in spite of the tragedy of Harry's death in March 1776, her career as a mother was to proceed as usual.

This puzzle has no direct bearing on my problem. But it may bear on it indirectly. Her next letter, written from her bed at Streatham (whither they had returned; she was suffering from the mild complaint called 'cholera morbus') is dated 'Thursday Morning', which seems to mean 6 June, 1776.

'How can you say what you do about the *great Affair*, and yet be so sincerely kind to me as you are? what else can this World afford me? Reason as you well know gives only stubbornness, Religion itself only Patience; the Birth of another Son—poor Amends—is the only Event that can give present Consolation, or future hope of Happiness in *this Life*.'

Now if 'the great Affair' is pregnancy—a theme, as we have seen, of mere speculation at this date—what she says seems not to fit well what is in his letter (486) as she printed it. And if it is something else—e.g. some affair of business—there is nothing of it in that letter. The possibility thus occurs that the text of 486 is incomplete.

He seems to reply in 488—a letter which also has not been seen since 1918. In 1788 it is dated only 'June 6', but the year is not in doubt. 'How could you so mistake me? I am very desirous that the whole business should be as you would have it, only cheerfulness at that time is reckoned a good thing.'

If Johnson and Mrs. Thrale were so mistaking each other, perhaps we can hardly hope to do better.

I have noticed nothing more. This test, therefore, may be said to yield an almost purely negative result. Perhaps the same, or something like it, may be said of my investigation as a whole. Even so it has a certain interest. Mrs. Piozzi has ever since 1788 lain under suspicion of tampering with Johnson's letters, and even of forging; she deserves the tardy justice of a full inquiry.

From all the evidence I draw this very tentative conclusion. We are entitled to suspect Mrs. Piozzi, if we find anything intrinsically suspicious. We are not entitled to suspect her in general. She seems to have been, at the worst, indifferent honest.

## THE CIRCULATION OF NEWSPAPERS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

By A. ASPINALL

More than eleven and a half million newspapers were sold every day in Great Britain in 1938: approximately one paper for every four inhabitants. When Pitt became Prime Minister in 1783, very few more were sold during the whole of that year, so that there was then, on an average, only one newspaper daily for every 300 inhabitants. The reasons for this ridiculously small circulation are well known: mechanical difficulties hindering production, the backwardness of communications, the illiteracy of the population, Post Office restrictions, the hostile attitude of the governing class, and above all, heavy taxation.<sup>1</sup> Less well known, however, are the expedients to which the middle class and the working classes resorted in an effort to overcome the obstacle of high prices resulting from the above-mentioned handicaps.

At no time were newspapers beyond the reach of town workers. As long ago as the 1730's, Montesquieu, whilst in England, had been struck, not only with the number and licentiousness of the London newspapers (the dailies and weeklies together being about twenty) but also with the ease with which their information reached working men. The very slaters had the newspapers brought on to the roofs of the houses on which they were working, that they might read them.<sup>2</sup> Nor were newspapers beyond the reach of agricultural labourers, though there were doubtless many villages during the last decades of the eighteenth century which saw a newspaper only at irregular intervals.

<sup>1</sup> It may be useful to summarize the changes in taxation, since the figures are often incorrectly given:

	<i>Newspaper Stamp Duty</i>	<i>Advertisement Duty</i>	<i>Pamphlet Duty</i>
1712	½d. (half a sheet) 1d. per whole sheet	1s. each	2s. per sheet
1757	1d. per sheet or half a sheet	2s.	
1776	1½d.		
1780		2s. 6d.	
1789	2d.	3s.	
1797	3½d.		
1815	4d.	3s. 6d.	3s.

These figures apply to Great Britain; the Irish were somewhat different. The pamphlet duty was merely a registration duty, payable on only one copy in each edition. The number of newspaper stamps sold in Great Britain in 1801 was 16,085,000; in 1821, 24,862,000; in 1831, 33,450,000; in 1841, 54,769,000.

<sup>2</sup> Montesquieu, *Notes sur Angleterre*.



It was calculated in 1829 that, on an average, every London newspaper was read by thirty people.<sup>1</sup> At that time every large, and indeed almost every small, town had its subscription reading-room, a guinea a year being the sum commonly charged for the service.<sup>2</sup> Glasgow had its reading-room, where pamphlets as well as newspapers were taken in, as early as 1794, as appears from the *Trial of David Downie for High Treason* on 5 and 6 September of that year.<sup>3</sup> Joseph Johnson, a Manchester brushmaker, one of 'Orator' Hunt's associates who were found guilty at York Assizes in March 1820 of conspiracy and unlawful assembly on the occasion of the famous meeting in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, on 16 August 1819, kept a shop in Shude Hill which was regularly used as a working-class reading-room: the *Manchester Observer*<sup>4</sup> was one of the papers taken in.<sup>5</sup> By 1815 reading-rooms were to be found in all parts of the country, and a large town would have several. Books and pamphlets, too, were commonly taken in. The selection of newspapers was usually made by a majority vote of the subscribers; and, as they usually liked to hear both sides of a question, Opposition as well as ministerial papers were purchased.<sup>6</sup> We hear from Samuel Rogers of a reading-room in 1799 combined with a circulating library. He wrote on 23 November: 'I am much obliged to you, for the newspapers, which come regularly. Indeed, I am very luxurious in that article of news, being furnished with the three evening papers regularly after sunset from the libraries.'<sup>6</sup> And *The Times* of 15 February 1819 contained the following advertisement:

SUBSCRIPTION READING ROOM, No. 137, Oxford Street.

W. Reynolds, at the commencement of the 2nd year of the above establishment, begs to return his most grateful thanks for the liberal patronage with which it has been honoured, and to assure his subscribers that nothing shall be wanting on his part to secure that select association, and at the same time the early possession of every new work connected with Literature, in addition to a large collection of Dictionaries, Lexicons and other books of reference, with the daily morning and evening papers.

Open to subscribers only from 9 in the morning till 10 o'clock in the evening: subscription £2 2s. per annum, from the date of the entry.

<sup>1</sup> *Westminster Review*, vol. x, p. 478 (April 1829: 'Weekly Newspapers'). Since, it was said, many provincial newspapers were not read by more than seven or eight persons, every copy of a newspaper in Great Britain as a whole was read by perhaps twenty-five persons on an average. The guinea charge is mentioned in the *Westminster Review* article on the Provincial Newspaper Press (January 1830, p. 70).

<sup>2</sup> *State Trials*, vol. xxiv, col. 104.

<sup>3</sup> 'Of which James Wroe was proprietor. In the Home Office papers are many complaints by magistrates and others as to this newspaper, and the Law Officers of the Crown were frequently consulted as to seditious libels which had appeared in it.' (*State Trials*, New Series, vol. i, col. 183 n.)

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, N.S. vol. i, cols. 183, 371-72. Trial of Henry Hunt and others, 1820.

<sup>5</sup> *Cobbett's Political Register*, 22 March 1817.

<sup>6</sup> P. W. Clayden, *Early Life of Samuel Rogers*, p. 389. He was writing from Exmouth.

The taste for newspaper-reading, it was suggested in 1829, was so great at Birmingham that a subscription reading-room 'upon a very extensive scale' had recently been established in that town.<sup>1</sup> An equally remarkable reading-room was attached to the Manchester bookshop started in the 1830's by John Doherty, the Radical Reformer and trade-union leader. This 'Coffee and Newsroom' was advertised in the *Manchester and Salford Advertiser* on 2 March 1833. It was open from six in the morning until ten at night. Ninety-six newspapers were taken in every week; they included the principal Manchester and London papers, some from Dublin, Belfast, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Leeds, most of the unstamped (and therefore illegal) ones, and even the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Westminster Review* (though not, it may be observed, the *Tory Quarterly Review*). Most of these papers could be bought at half price on the day preceding the publication of the succeeding number. The advertisement went on:<sup>2</sup>

This establishment affords advantages never before offered to the Manchester public, combining economy, health, temperance and instruction, in having a wholesome and exhilarating beverage at a small expense, instead of the noxious and intoxicating stuff usually supplied at the alehouse and dramshop, together with the privilege of perusing the most able and popular publications of the day, whether political, literary or scientific, in a comfortable and genteel apartment, in the evening brilliantly lighted with gas.<sup>3</sup>

A mass-meeting held near Burnley three months after the 'Manchester Massacre' was followed by criminal proceedings against eight Lancashire Reformers at Lancaster Assizes in April 1820. The prosecution revealed the existence at Prescott of 'Union Rooms'<sup>4</sup> supported by penny-a-week subscriptions, where papers such as the Radical *Manchester Observer* were taken in. Dewhurst, one of the defendants, had addressed the crowd, strongly urging them to subscribe for newspapers, so that, in particular, the proceedings of Parliament might be closely watched.<sup>5</sup>

In November 1819 the ministerial *Courier* informed its readers with great satisfaction that the South Shields reading-room was proposing to

<sup>1</sup> *Westminster Review*, January 1830, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> R. Cassirer, *The Irish Influence on the Liberal Movement in England, 1798-1832* (Unpublished Univ. of London Ph. D. Thesis), p. 546.

<sup>3</sup> Very few English or Scottish newspapers circulated in Belfast in the 1820's, but the reading-rooms took them in. (H. of C., *Accounts and Papers*, 1828, vol. xv, p. 331. Evidence of Alexander Mackay, former proprietor of the *Belfast Newsletter*.) The Anti-Corn Law League had its own newsrooms (*Trial of Feargus O'Connor and 58 other Chartists, on a charge of seditious conspiracy*, 1 March 1843, p. 145).

<sup>4</sup> These presumably belonged to the Union Clubs. Manchester had a 'Patriotic Union Society' (*State Trials*, N.S. vol. i, col. 1373). A meeting of Lancashire Reformers held at Oldham on 7 June 1819 recommended 'the formation of Union Societies in every town and village in the kingdom, for the purpose of acquiring and diffusing political information, and also the frequent holding of public and district meetings' (*Ibid.*, N.S. vol. i, col. 1383). The Union Societies, or Clubs, whose object, like that of the Hampden Clubs, was to promote a radical reform of Parliament, are frequently referred to in the *Parliamentary Debates* for the year 1817.

<sup>5</sup> *State Trials*, N.S. vol. i, col. 564.

expel *The Times*, presumably because of its critical attitude to the Government after 'Peterloo'. *The Times* declared: 'The matter is of no consequence to us whichever way decided; we can, however, inform the *Courier* that the proposal was negatived by 18 to 10. While the *Courier* exults in the proposal to lower our sale by one, by how many has he been expelled? By upwards of 5,000; we tell him boldly, and he cannot deny it.'<sup>1</sup> These figures seem hardly credible.

Richard Davis, the secretary of the reading-room at Southampton, wrote to the editor of the short-lived Radical weekly, the *Cap of Liberty*, in August 1819, saying that a meeting of the subscribers had carried certain resolutions by 42 to 3 votes. In view of the *Courier's* attempts to justify the conduct of the Manchester magistrates on 16 August, that newspaper was no longer to be taken in, and four offending numbers were to be unceremoniously kicked out of the room. The members, he said, were neither Jacobins nor Radicals; they admired the venerable fabric of the Constitution as much as did the editor of the *Courier*. It was because they prized the rights they enjoyed under the protection of that Constitution that they were the more indignant at the shedding of so much innocent blood.<sup>2</sup>

A few weeks later, another correspondent informed the *Cap of Liberty* of the intended establishment of a Reformers' newsroom in Manchester. He also suggested the starting of a combined newsroom and 'eating house' for Lancashire Reformers living in the country. Such papers as the *Manchester Observer*,<sup>3</sup> the *Leeds Mercury*, the *Liverpool Mercury*, the *British Gazette*, the *Irishman* and the *Scotsman* should be taken in. He went on<sup>4</sup>:

To the information contained in the weekly papers might be added the whole of that which is published in the various political tracts, and perhaps the country people might be indulged with a sight of the London papers, when they have been two days upon the tables of the 'Manchester Reformers' Newsroom'. A moderate-sized house, in a proper situation, furnished in a homely way with chairs, tables, gridiron, pans &c for the weavers and others from the country, or town either, to cook their herring, black pudding, bacon collop, &c would be quite sufficient. During the winter season very good fires

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 17 November 1819.

<sup>2</sup> *Cap of Liberty*, 8 September 1819. This was the first number of that paper, published on Wednesdays, price 2d.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times* declared: 'The shop of Wroe, the printer of the *Manchester Observer*, in that part of Market Street which has been called "Sedition Corner", is perpetually beset with poor misled creatures, whose appetite for seditious ribaldry, created at first by distress, is whetted by every species of stimulating novelty. *Medusas*, *Gorgons*, *Black Dwarfs* [three other Radical weeklies] and all the monstrous progeny begotten by disaffection upon ignorance, are heaped on the table or in the windows, with hideous profusion, and the money which should be expended in buying bread for their famishing families is often squandered in the purchase of such pestilent publications.' (*The Times*, 11 August 1819).

<sup>4</sup> *Cap of Liberty*, 29 September 1819.

should be kept. The proprietor might call it 'The Cap of Liberty', 'Country Reformers' Newsroom and Cooking House', 'Liberty Hall', or give it any other appellation they may like better. In my opinion, 2d. a time calling, paid by each person, would be sufficient to maintain the above, for which, besides the benefit of seeing and hearing the news, enjoying a warm fire, and liberty for to cook for themselves [*sic*], the Reformers might have a pint of ginger beer or treacle beer. They might wait an hour or two for work &c without being put to much expense; and by such accommodation they would ensure their health, improve their minds, enrich their pockets, *reduce the revenue*, and have the pleasure of meeting friends of Reform from all part[s] of the country.

Newsrooms were certainly not organized invariably on party lines; otherwise Lord Lowther could not have informed his father, Lord Lonsdale, in 1823 that County members of Parliament often supplied the newsrooms of the principal towns in their constituencies with complete sets of the printed Parliamentary Papers, at an expense of about £4 10s. a year. He inquired: 'Would you wish that I should order them to be sent to the newsroom at Whitehaven? We do so to Appleby.'<sup>1</sup>

The *Medusa*, or *Penny Politician*, declared in September 1819 that reading societies had recently been established in London and a number of manufacturing towns. Pamphlets and 'independent' (that is, Radical) newspapers were read at meetings on Sundays and in the evenings. The establishment of 'Political Reading Societies' all over the country would, it was suggested, greatly accelerate the progress of Reform, and Sundays would be much better employed in this way than by 'echoing discord to the sonorous notes and thumpings of a methodistical ignoramus, who picks the pockets and darkens the understandings of his audience at the same time.'<sup>2</sup>

These reading societies were distinct from the 'Political Protestant Associations', of which the prototype was established at Hull in July 1818. They were so called because they protested against 'the mockery of their indisputable right to a real representation' in Parliament. They planned weekly meetings in classes of not more than twenty, with a penny-a-week subscription to cover the cost of newspapers.<sup>3</sup> 'We sincerely believe that political ignorance has been the cause of all our national misery and degradation, and that nothing but a firm and extensive Union of the people to promote and diffuse a more correct knowledge of our immutable rights, can possibly protect our country either from absolute despotism on the one hand, or a dreadful revolution and anarchy on the other.' A member of the Association at Crediton reported in October 1818 that they met regularly once a week for the purpose of 'perusing such periodical and other works as are calculated to afford political informa-

<sup>1</sup> *Private Lonsdale MSS.* Lord Lowther to Lord Lonsdale, 2 April 1823.

<sup>2</sup> *Medusa*, 11 September 1819.

<sup>3</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 19 August 1818.

tion'.<sup>1</sup> A few months later, Wooler, the editor of the *Black Dwarf*, said that these Associations were being formed all over the country.<sup>2</sup> From the constant publicity which he gave their proceedings we may perhaps infer that his newspaper was taken in by these Societies. They were doubtless as short-lived as the *Black Dwarf* itself: they were the product of that agitation for a radical reform of Parliament, the abolition of sinecures and pensions, and the repeal of the 'Waterloo' Corn Law which was crushed or driven underground by the repressive legislation of 1819.

These Political Protestant Associations did not originate the habit of reading newspapers aloud. Some of the middle-class and working-class Reformist Societies which flourished during the French Revolutionary period, such as the London Corresponding Society, of which Thomas Hardy, the shoemaker, was Secretary, used this method of disseminating news. Explaining the practice in 1793, James Lomax, a member of the Manchester Reformation Society, said: 'We had nothing else to pass our time away with, and [we wished] to see how public affairs were going on.'<sup>3</sup> A Tory member of Parliament, Sir Thomas Turton, alleged in 1807, on the authority of an Admiral of the Fleet, that the practice of reading newspapers on board ship at nightly meetings had unsettled the minds of our sailors, and had helped to produce that disaffection which had culminated in the naval mutinies of 1797.<sup>4</sup>

In 1829 Thomas Attwood founded the Birmingham Political Union to promote the cause of Parliamentary Reform. It originated the practice, which continued for many years, of having newspapers read at large public meetings. During the ensuing struggle for the Reform Bill, people met in Union Street and other Birmingham thoroughfares during their dinner hour and in the evenings, to hear the news of the day. This happened too during the Chartist agitation. On 4 July 1839, for example, a crowd of at least 800 people met in the Bull Ring, Birmingham, and paid

<sup>1</sup> *Black Dwarf*, 11 November 1818.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 April 1819.

<sup>3</sup> *State Trials*, xxiii, col. 1136. Trial of Thomas Walker and others, for a Conspiracy.

<sup>4</sup> *Parl. Deb.*, vol. ix, col. 1054\* (4 August 1807). The little evidence there is to support this suggestion is given in Conrad Gill, *The Naval Mutinies of 1797*. The *London Evening Post* (11 May 1797) said that 'some persons from London had been distributing handbills through the fleet, inflaming the minds of the seamen'. The *True Briton* (9 May 1797) declared: 'We yesterday learnt that the present ferment in the fleet arose from a gross misrepresentation of what passed a few days ago in Parliament, upon the subject of the late complaints of the seamen conveyed through the medium of a Jacobin evening newspaper, which got on board the fleet.' The reference is probably to the *Courier*, which was mentioned by a Secret Committee of the House of Commons as having helped to foment the Mutiny. The following quotation shows how these 'seditious' prints circulated among the ships: 'On 5 or 6 May a boat from the *Mars* came alongside the *Queen Charlotte*. The men in the boat threw in a bundle of newspapers through a lower-deck port-hole, and shouted that Parliament was going to refuse the promised redress.' (C. Gill, *The Naval Mutinies of 1797*, pp. 49-50, 304). This view of the cause of the mutinies is not endorsed by Dobrée and Manwaring, *The Floating Republic*.



'very polite attention to a person reading a newspaper'.<sup>1</sup> The police attacked with their truncheons and the meeting was broken up.

In his *Memoirs*, Viscount Snowden said that he had often heard his father relate how, in the Chartist days, a number of Yorkshire hand-loom weavers contributed  $\frac{1}{4}d.$  a week to buy a copy of the *Leeds Mercury*, and with these coppers he was sent to a village four miles away every week to get the paper; and then the subscribers met in a cottage and he read the news to them.<sup>2</sup>

Henry Goulburn, the Tory politician, explained in 1836 how the working classes often associated for the purpose of reading newspapers in common. A newspaper was generally taken in by the employer. When he had finished with it he would hand it over to his household servants, from whom it found its well-thumbed way to the labourers.<sup>3</sup> At a much earlier period we hear of Scottish newspapers being passed on from one farm to another until a single copy had covered practically the whole of a parish.<sup>4</sup> In his Autobiography Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, tells how a number of brushmakers in his native town, Gainsborough, jointly subscribed for papers like Wooler's *Black Dwarf*, Cobbett's *Political Register*, and the *News*.<sup>5</sup>

Coffee-houses in the towns, public-houses in town and village, and gin-shops were, together, more important agencies for the dissemination of newspaper information than were either public meetings or Radical Reformist Societies. We find that in 1793 the London Corresponding Society kept the coffee houses and taverns in Edinburgh (and, presumably, not in Edinburgh alone) supplied with copies of the *Courier*, then an Opposition newspaper.<sup>6</sup> The trial of Dr. William Hudson on 9 December 1793 for sedition yields an interesting reference to the New London Coffee House, and the newspapers it took in. Arriving there about seven in the evening on the preceding 30 September, the defendant called for a newspaper, sat down in a box,<sup>7</sup> in the open coffee-room, and began reading aloud the account of the defeat of the Dutch troops. John Buchanan, a Glasgow 'manufacturer', who gave evidence at the trial, was sitting in a chair at the end of the next box, and, like other people near, heard all that the accused was saying. John Leech, the proprietor, deposed that the defendant and his companion, Mr. Pigott, 'called for several papers, in fact, I believe all the papers, and as they called them they read different

<sup>1</sup> W. Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, vol. i, p. 222 (1929); *State Trials*, New Series, vol. iii, col. 1184 (The Queen v. Lovett, 1839).

<sup>2</sup> Lord Snowden, *Memoirs*, vol. i, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Parl. Deb.* 3rd Series, vol. xxxiv, col. 641 (20 June 1836).

<sup>4</sup> M. E. Craig, *The Scottish Periodical Press, 1750-1789*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Cooper, *Life, written by himself*, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> *State Trials*, vol. xxiv, col. 425. Trial of Thomas Hardy for High Treason.

<sup>7</sup> For these boxes see W. Lovett's *Life and Struggles*, vol. i, p. 85 (1929).

paragraphs from them, and commented on the paragraphs as they went on'.<sup>1</sup> Incidentally, they drank, not coffee, but glasses of punch.

Opponents of a cheap Press denied emphatically that the 4d. stamp duty debarred the poor from reading newspapers. Sir Charles Knightley, a Tory country gentleman, said that in London, coffee houses were to be found in every street. He added that even if the stamp duty was repealed altogether it would be impossible to buy a newspaper for less than 3d.; as it was, any newspaper published in London could be read and enjoyed with an excellent cup of coffee for half the money.<sup>2</sup>

According to William Lovett, comparatively few coffee-houses and eating-houses in London in the 1820's were frequented by working men. Those who worked at a distance from their homes generally got their meals at public houses.<sup>3</sup> But the situation changed after the reduction of the stamp duty to 1d. in 1836. Lovett wrote:<sup>4</sup>

To this cheap literature, and the subsequent cheap newspapers that resulted from our warfare,<sup>5</sup> may be also traced the great extension of the coffee-rooms and reading-rooms of our large towns, and the mental and moral improvement resulting from their establishment.

Lovett himself opened a coffee-house in Greville Street in 1834, 'one of the rooms being fitted up as a *conversation-room*, so as to separate the talkers from the readers'. He added: 'I took in what at that time was considered a large supply of newspapers and periodicals, and had, moreover, a library attached to it of several hundred volumes.'<sup>6</sup>

The Report of the Committee on the Import Duties, 1841, contains interesting facts about the London coffee-houses of the period. It was stated in evidence that there were not more than a dozen coffee-shops in London in 1815, but that the number had risen to 1600 or 1800 in 1840, and that new ones were opening at the rate of nearly a hundred a year.

<sup>1</sup> *State Trials*, vol. xxii, col. 1022, 1025.

<sup>2</sup> *Parl. Deb.* 3rd Series, vol. xxxiv, col. 614 (20 June 1836).

<sup>3</sup> W. Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, vol. i, p. 32 (1929).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 64.

<sup>5</sup> That is, the struggle of the unstamped Press against the Government.

<sup>6</sup> W. Lovett, *Life and Struggles*, vol. i, p. 89 (1929). The *Dublin Evening Post* of 7 September 1826 had an advertisement offering London newspapers at 4d. each (the price in England was 7d.). Staunton, the editor and proprietor of the *Morning Register*, a Dublin paper, thought that the advertisement had been inserted by some coffee-house keeper in Dublin, who received the London papers in the morning, used them until evening, and then posted them to country subscribers at half price. (*H. of C. Accounts and Papers*, 1828, vol. xv, p. 325). Alexander Mackay, the proprietor of the *Belfast Newsletter*, said in 1826 that 'the coffee-room' in Belfast was one of the few places which subscribed for the Dublin newspapers. (*Ibid.*, p. 331). A handbill printed by 'Connor, Printer, Circulating-Library, Castle-street, Cork', advertising the forthcoming appearance of a bi-weekly paper, to be called *The Cork Herald: or Munster Advertiser*, stated, in its concluding paragraph: 'Subscribers' names to this paper will be received by Messrs. White, Harris, Edwards, Haly, and Connor, Booksellers, and at the Bar of each Coffee-House.' The paper was started early in 1798. (*State Paper Office, Dublin Castle. Rebellion Papers*, 620/35/85).

One of them, which charged 1½d. a cup, had from 1500 to 1800 customers daily. James Pamphilon, keeper of the Crown Coffee House, at 3 and 4, Sherrard Street, Haymarket, said that he took in 43 daily newspapers, and that he had five or six copies of some of them (eight copies of the *Morning Chronicle*); all these were for the sole use of his customers. In addition, he took in seven provincial and six foreign papers, 24 magazines, four quarterly Reviews, and eleven weekly periodicals, and any customer who bought a cup of coffee could read anything he pleased. He said that the reason why he had from 1,600 to 1,800 customers daily was, partly the low price of his coffee, partly the excellence of his supply of newspapers. He had found that the desire to read newspapers had increased. All classes of people frequented his house, but the majority were artisans; the 'more respectable' classes used the two best of his three rooms. J. B. Humphreys, keeper of the coffee house at 41, High Holborn, who had from 400 to 450 customers daily, said that before the reduction of the stamp duty in 1836 he had paid £400 a year for newspapers, magazines, and the cost of binding back numbers for the use of his customers.<sup>1</sup>

As for rural workers, they found in the village ale-house a meeting-place where they might hear the news read, even if they could not read it themselves.<sup>2</sup> Cobbett said in 1807 that newspapers were then reaching a much wider public than was the case a quarter of a century earlier. Where was one to find an ale-house without a newspaper? 'Ask the landlord why he takes the newspaper; he'll tell you that it attracts people to his house; and in many ways its attractions are much stronger than those of the liquor there drunk, thousands upon thousands of men having become sots through the attractions of these vehicles of novelty and falsehood.'<sup>3</sup>

Henry Hetherington, who played a leading part in the struggle for an untaxed Newspaper Press during the early 1830's, particularly recommended his *Penny Papers for the People* to the proprietors of coffee houses and 'the new beer shops', where working men would be able 'to improve the condition of their minds and bodies at one and the same time'.<sup>4</sup> But those who cared for the morals of the working man objected to his being sent to the public house to read a newspaper, and preferred that he should be in a position to have one in his own cottage. The reduction or repeal of the newspaper stamp duty, therefore, urged the temperance party, would

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from the evidence are quoted in C. Badham's *Life of James Deacon Hume*, pp. 271-74.

<sup>2</sup> In the middle of the eighteenth century an innkeeper made a charge for the use of his newspapers. Parson Woodforde wrote in his *Diary*, 5 September 1761: 'For reading the newspapers at Ansford Inn, 7d.'; and on 12 August 1762: 'Went with Mr. Clarke over to Ansford Inn to read the news, where I pd. 4½d.' (vol. i, pp. 18, 21). There is no mention of a charge in a later entry (1 July 1779): 'About noon I walked down to Cary with brother Heighes and read the London paper at the George Inn' (vol. i, p. 254).

<sup>3</sup> *Cobbett's Political Register*, 26 September 1807.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in *Quarterly Review*, vol. xlv, p. 302 (January 1831).

vastly improve the general condition of the people. 'We go to the public house', said a working man, 'to read the sevenpenny paper, but only for the news. It is the cheap penny paper that the working man can take home and read at spare moments, which he has by him to take up and read over and over again, whenever he has leisure, that forms his opinions.'<sup>1</sup>

Public houses were disliked by frightened Tories during the period of the French Revolution because they were places where the lower orders talked sedition and voiced their discontent. Godwin called the public house the labourer's University, where men were educated into citizenship. Even small public houses in London (comprising tap-room, bar and parlour) would usually take in two daily newspapers; the average gin-shop would have one.<sup>2</sup> A single copy of *Cobbett's Political Register*, which cost 1s. 0½d. in 1815, could be read by, or read out to, scores of country folk at a public house. Southey told Lord Liverpool in 1817 that repressive laws would be altogether nugatory so long as papers like Cobbett's *Register* and *Hone's Register* were 'read aloud in every ale-house' and wherever soldiers met together.<sup>3</sup> Lord Lowther said in 1821 that the scandalous Tory weekly paper, *John Bull*, was read in all the public houses.<sup>4</sup> Wordsworth suggested that much good might be done if clergymen, country gentlemen, and 'leading manufacturers and tradesmen' would use their influence in introducing loyal newspapers into public houses. 'There are numberless places, thank God, yet left in the country, where a publican would as readily take in a good newspaper as a bad one.'<sup>5</sup>

Cobbett, however, was told in 1816 that at three public houses in one country town the landlords had objected to meetings for reading the *Political Register* being held on their premises, for fear they should lose their licenses. It was this circumstance which caused Cobbett suddenly to reduce the price of his paper to 2d. in November of that year, publishing it in a form which required no stamp.<sup>6</sup> His example was quickly followed by others, who were not always on the Radical side. The Government

<sup>1</sup> *Parl. Deb.* 3rd Series, vol. xiii, col. 624 (14 June 1832).

<sup>2</sup> A licensed victualler wrote a letter to *The Times* about his expenses, which was published on 25 January 1817. The main items were as follows: rent £50, coal £30, two servants £45, oil and candles £18, newspapers (two a day) £20. The total amounted to £150 a year, plus £50 for rent. On the other hand, he said, the expenses of the gin-shop proprietor were much smaller. He took in only one newspaper, and his total expenses, not including rent, were less than £55 a year.

<sup>3</sup> C. D. Yonge, *Life of Lord Liverpool*, vol. ii, p. 298. *The Queen's Stores*, a public house in Whittle Street, Manchester, in 1843 had a separate newsroom, a large room with a bagatelle board in it; but when asked whether it was a public newsroom, the publican replied, 'There is very little news read in it' (*Trial of Feargus O'Connor* . . . 1 March 1843, p. 119).

<sup>4</sup> *Private Lonsdale MSS.* Lord Lowther to Lord Lonsdale, 5 February 1821.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Wordsworth to Lord Lonsdale, n.d. (c. 1820).

<sup>6</sup> He continued the more expensive edition for the benefit of his more prosperous readers. 'The form is valuable', he said, 'because, being capable of being collected into volumes, and easily referred to, the contents have effect long after their dates' (*Cobbett's Political Register*, 16 November 1816).

and its supporters, indeed, paid Cobbett the compliment of imitating his methods. He was to be 'written down'. 'Accordingly, up sprang all the little pamphlets at Norwich, Romsey, Oxford and many other places, while in London there were several, one of which could not cost less than 2,000 guineas in advertising in large and expensive placards.'<sup>1</sup> When Gibbons Merle (editor of the *Courier* during the premiership of Lord Grey) started a Tory 4d. weekly, the *White Dwarf*, in opposition to Wooler's *Black Dwarf* and similiar papers, he too suggested that working men, who could obviously not afford individual copies, should share one. He exhorted them also to leave the public house (where, presumably, they had been accustomed to read Cobbett's *Register*), and to drink their beer and porter by their own fire-sides, with their wives and 'pretty little prattlers' around them.<sup>2</sup>

William Hone thus summarises the Government's efforts at counter-propaganda in 1817:<sup>3</sup>

*Anti-Cobbetting* is all over: there will be no more printing at 1½d. a sheet, to be ½d. less than *Cobbett's Political Pamphlet*; no more leaving them in at coffee houses and on tap-room tables; no more sending them gratis to 'well-disposed people', and dropping them down areas; no more coaxing and pushing and wheedling people to take them in for the use of the servants and apprentices. It was all up-hill, unprofitable work, whilst it lasted; for, like brother Jackson, of the *Romsey Register*,<sup>4</sup> they could get nobody to read them—they might be bought by the great folks, to give away, to be sure—but as to an independent journeyman or mechanic or handicraftsman being enticed to purchase the *Anti-Cobbett* for 1½d., why, it was like offering a 1½d. ounce of salts to a famishing man who wanted to lay out 2d. in buying a loaf.

Nor did the authorities frown even upon public meetings when the purpose was to counteract poisonous Radical prints. Gibbons Merle urged manufacturers, landowners and other employers of labour to summon meetings of their workpeople, at which they were requested to read aloud, several times, a long Address 'To the Labouring Classes of Society', which formed a large part of the second number of the *White Dwarf*<sup>5</sup>—just as, with a different purpose, Cobbett had written Addresses to the Reformers and to the Journeymen and Labourers.<sup>6</sup>

For a short time after November 1816 the sale of Cobbett's twopenny *Political Register* rose to 40,000 or 50,000 copies a week: a figure many times larger than that of any other newspaper; and, too, a single copy

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 August 1817. Cobbett's figures are hardly credible.

<sup>2</sup> *White Dwarf*, 6 December 1817.

<sup>3</sup> *Hone's Reformists' Register*, 12 April 1817.

<sup>4</sup> On 4 January 1817 Cobbett published an exposure of Jackson's 'loyal' paper, which was called a *Register*, with Cobbett's name printed in large type near the head of the front page: the intention was to make people believe that they were buying Cobbett's own paper—so he said.

<sup>5</sup> *White Dwarf*, 6 December 1817.

<sup>6</sup> *Cobbett's Political Register*, 26 October and 2 November 1816.



frequently served for scores of auditors.<sup>1</sup> Samuel Bamford, the Lancashire Reformer, said that the *Political Register* was read on nearly every cottage hearth in the manufacturing districts of South Lancashire, Leicester, Derby and Nottingham, and in many of the Scottish manufacturing towns.<sup>2</sup> The editor of the *Gorgon*, a penny paper started on 23 May 1818,<sup>3</sup> claimed that it was being very widely circulated in Manchester.<sup>4</sup> Lord Liverpool was deeply impressed in 1819 by the comparison between the number of cheap papers in 1780, or even 1809, with that of his day. Cheap tracts were being circulated, he said, for half-pence and farthings throughout the country.<sup>5</sup> Sydney Smith remarked at the same time that there were then four times as many readers as there were before the French Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

In view of the open hostility of the authorities, and considering that, as an unstamped journal, the *Political Register* could not be sent by post, Cobbett's achievement was a remarkable one. Shopkeepers all over the country, in towns and villages, were invited to act as selling agents. They were requested to send a regular weekly order to the London publisher, giving him 'very plain' directions as to the coach by which the parcel was to be dispatched, and the inn from which the coach started in London. With every parcel sent into the country a placard was enclosed for display in the shopkeeper's window, so that the public would know where the *Register* was on sale.<sup>7</sup> As the wholesale price was 12s. 6d. a hundred (11s. if at least 1,000 copies were ordered regularly by one individual week by week) the profit on the sale of a few hundreds was, as Cobbett pointed out, sufficient to support a small family.<sup>8</sup> One man, who lived in a cottage by the side of a Common, had made a profit of 75s. within two or three weeks by selling 1,800 of the twopenny *Registers*, taking them to all the neighbouring towns and villages.<sup>9</sup> Cobbett suggested that one good way of increasing the sale was for the shopkeeper to send for a thousand copies weekly and then employ others to hawk them about the country at 12s.

<sup>1</sup> *Cobbett's Political Register*, 16 November 1816. Sir Robert Wilson wrote to his friend Lord Grey, (6 November 1816): 'I sent you yesterday a paper of Cobbett's which is circulating with wings through the country. Many thousand were sold in a few hours' (*Brit. Mus. Addit. MSS.* 30121 [Sir R. Wilson Papers], fo. 197). He wrote again, two days later: 'The sale of Cobbett's paper has been prodigious. One bookseller sold 40,000, and above half a million have been distributed' (*Ibid.*, fo. 201).

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Bamford, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, vol. ii, p. 12 (1903).

<sup>3</sup> He had to raise the price to 1½d. on 3 October. 'It is only since the establishment of cheap publications', he said (16 January 1819) 'that the Press has become such a mighty engine in the cause of truth and the rights of man. The old Press was exclusively devoted either to the two aristocratical factions, which divided the Government, or the trading classes of the community . . . The working classes had no support from any of them; they had no oracle to proclaim their wrongs or advocate their interests.'

<sup>4</sup> *Gorgon*, 25 July 1818.

<sup>5</sup> *Parl. Deb.* vol. xli, col. 739 (6 December 1819).

<sup>6</sup> Lady Holland, *Memoir of Rev. Sydney Smith*, vol. 11, p. 187.

<sup>7</sup> *Cobbett's Political Register*, 16 November 1816.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 November 1816.

<sup>9</sup> *Cobbett's Political Register*, 7 December 1816.

6d. or 13s. a hundred.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that this method was frequently used.

The sale inevitably fell off sharply in 1820, when the Newspaper Stamp Duties Act (one of the 'Six Acts') compelled him to raise the price to 6d. In 1827 he was selling less than 400 copies of the stamped *Register* a week, and the sale of the unstamped edition cannot have been large, since few people living in the provinces got their copy at all regularly.<sup>2</sup> Country towns, it is true, had agents, but they could not undertake delivery to the villages, and even some of the towns received the *Register* only once a fortnight. Cobbett said in 1827 that for seven years people in the country had been constantly complaining of the non-arrival of their copy. The parcels were generally sent into the provinces by stage coach, but the guard often failed to collect or deliver them. So Cobbett advised his readers to buy the stamped edition, which they would be sure to receive with unfailing regularity. The price had risen to 6d., and stamped *Registers* only were to be published after December 1827, at a shilling, but he suggested that the number of readers need not decline. 'Little knots of friends' could meet at one another's houses to read the *Register*, and one of them could order it from a London newsman.<sup>3</sup> When prosecuting Cobbett in 1831 for publishing a seditious libel, the Attorney-General admitted that though the price was a shilling the labouring classes all over the country still contrived to read the *Register*.<sup>4</sup> They clubbed together, and sat 'in great societies' to read it, and it had 'a prodigious effect'.<sup>5</sup>

In April 1817 William Hone claimed that his own *Register* found its way into most English counties. To extend the sale into areas not already covered, he invited the co-operation of friends who would establish agencies in their neighbourhoods:<sup>6</sup>

Generally speaking, the persons who sold Mr. Cobbett's *Weekly Political Pamphlet* will be most suitable, because, as my own principles . . . have been those on which Mr. Cobbett conducted that publication, and as the *Reformists' Register* is consequently continued on such principles, Mr. Cobbett's readers will doubtless take it in the country, as they do in London and other parts of the kingdom, where it is known. It is now higher in circulation than any daily or weekly publication whatever—it is higher than the highest of them in sale, by many thousand copies, and increases every week; but the exertions of my

<sup>1</sup> *Cobbett's Political Register*, 28 December 1816.

<sup>2</sup> Unstamped publications could not be sent by post.

<sup>3</sup> From time to time Cobbett printed in his *Register* the names and addresses of all the London newsmen. He said that they were in general very respectable men, supplying all who applied to them, irrespective of their politics or religion. They supplied all London newspapers, without exception. (*Cobbett's Political Register*, 1 December 1827).

<sup>4</sup> *State Trials*, N.S. vol. ii, cols. 802, 855. 'It is taken in in many places where the poor are in the habit constantly of resorting.'

<sup>5</sup> 'I hope in God it has,' ejaculated Cobbett. 'Nothing has given me more delight than to hear him say that.' (*Ibid.*, c. 855).

<sup>6</sup> *Hone's Reformists' Register*, 19 April 1817.

country friends I shall still be thankful for. Applications for the *Reformists' Register* should be made to the different persons who sold Mr. Cobbett's *Weekly Political Pamphlet*. Country orders addressed to Mr. Hone, 67, Old Bailey, with remittances, or appointing payment in London, and mentioning the conveyance parcels are to be sent by, will be punctually executed, and bills and placards to hang at doors and shop windows enclosed.<sup>1</sup>

In 1789 the practice of hiring out newspapers at a small charge (a penny seems to have been the usual sum) had been made illegal under a penalty of £5. George Rose, then Secretary of the Treasury, stated that the practice dated from 1776. A single copy would be hired out to 20 or 30 readers in London, and would subsequently be sent into the country at a reduced price to compete unfairly with the provincial newspapers.<sup>2</sup> *The Times* declared that newspapers lent out to read were afterwards returned as unsold—'an imposition which had grown to a prodigious evil'. 'This practice is not only a material hurt to the revenue, but likewise great injury to the proprietors.'<sup>3</sup> This illegal practice continued almost unchecked, and there were often to be found in the advertisement columns of provincial newspapers offers to lend a copy of *The Times*. Roebuck said in 1835 that the law prohibiting the lending of newspapers was no longer enforced.<sup>4</sup> Staunton, the proprietor of the *Dublin Morning Register*, said in 1826 that the cost to a citizen of Dublin of the use of a daily newspaper was only a penny a day. One paper served five, six or even seven families. It was the general practice among Dublin newsvendors to hire out their papers, and to post them in the evening to country readers at half-price.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hone was not the only Radical publisher who experienced difficulty in collecting money from country agents; the writing off of bad debts was probably inevitable whenever vigorous efforts were made to push the sale. His *Register* came to an end on 25 October 1817 (it had started on 1 February of that year). He explained that the bad conduct of some of his agents in the country had proved a grievous embarrassment. 'Some have punctually and honestly paid me. Others have not only not been punctual, but have not paid me, whilst my inability to regulate my accounts when I was in confinement, and the necessity I have been under of attending a little to what business I found when I came out, and to the writing of the *Register*, prevented me from taking such steps as a keen tradesman might have done to enforce payment. One person, by repeated representations of activity and connexion and good will, induced me to send him the *Register* in large quantities every week, besides other goods, agreeable to his orders. I repeatedly wrote him for money, and he always promised, and put off. Being loth to discontinue the sale of the *Register* in a populous district, and he being the only agent in the county of Hampshire, I continued to forward them to him regularly. I have never been able to get the money from him for what he has sold, or to get back the publications which remain unsold. He has not paid me a sixpence! This is to be sure the worst specimen of my usage, but there are others nearly as bad. These remarks, however, do not apply to the present vendors of the *Register* at Birmingham, Bath, Bury, Maidstone, Norwich, Nottingham or Oxford; and I would especially except Mr. Wroe of Manchester, whose honourable conduct deserves my most honourable mention. The continuance of the *Register*, with decreased sale, and other inconveniences, added to the disadvantages I have mentioned, has become embarrassing to me.' (*Hone's Reformists' Register*, 25 October 1817.)

<sup>2</sup> *Parliamentary Register*, H. of C. vol. xxvi, p. 344 (3 July 1789).

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 27 June 1789.

<sup>4</sup> J. A. Roebuck, *Persecution of the Unstamped Press*, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *H. of C. Accounts and Papers*, 1828, vol. xv, pp. 323, 325.

The *Anti-Jacobin* had highly approved and 'earnestly recommended' the practice of lending its numbers to poorer neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

The striking success of the Newspaper Press in reaching the masses in spite of the tremendous handicaps of oppressive taxation and severe legal restraints, is not without its importance in English history. The multiplication of newspaper readers gradually produced a revolution in our government by increasing the number of those who exercised some sort of judgement on public affairs. Pitt's friend and colleague, Lord Grenville, considered that the Press was the most powerful of the agencies which produced the French Revolution, and he thought in 1817 that in England, too, the popular Press might be sufficiently influential to bring about a revolution. 'The seditious writers of the present day, who deluged the country . . . with their wicked and blasphemous productions, did not make it a question by whom the Government was to be administered, but whether a Government should exist at all.' The Press was a far more important instrument of progress than the Platform, at any rate until the Anti-Corn Law League demonstrated the possibilities of large-scale, high-pressure agitation by means of public meetings; and even the League owed much of its success to its mass-propaganda by the agency of cheap newspapers and pamphlets. All the great reforms of the period, such as the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, catholic emancipation, the Reform Bill of 1832 and the repeal of the corn laws, were preceded by long periods of agitation, of which the Newspaper Press was an indispensable instrument. For many years Cobbett and lesser journalists agitated against political sinecures and the swollen pension list. It was their propaganda which made the very word pensioner appear loathsome and revolting; had they not succeeded in impressing their views on the people there would have been no thorough-going abolition of sinecure places and no reform of the Pension List after 1832; we should not have heard complaints of old-fashioned Tories of 'the cowardly desire' of many members of Parliament to 'curry favour with their constituents' by criticising the Pension List in 1830 and subsequent years. It was the mass pressure of public opinion, formed by the Radical Press, acting on a reluctant Legislature, which brought about the reform of Parliament in 1832, and this great achievement was made possible only by the success of the conductors of the Press in reaching, by ways indicated in the foregoing pages, a very much larger public than, judging from the circulation statistics, one would have thought possible.

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Jacobin*, 9 July 1798 (the last number). It declared that it had 2,500 subscribers, and, since everyone's family might 'reasonably' be supposed to consist of seven, the number of readers could be taken to be 17,500, or 50,000, including the 'poorer neighbours' to whom the paper was passed on.

## THE BYZANTINE POEMS OF W. B. YEATS

BY A. NORMAN JEFFARES

This article is concerned with two poems by W. B. Yeats, 'Sailing to Byzantium' and 'Byzantium', which are well-known examples of the poet's later work. As a result of the great kindness of Mrs. W. B. Yeats I have been permitted to study the poet's unpublished writings, including the manuscript drafts for these two poems. The results of this investigation have been implemented by Mrs. Yeats's unique knowledge of the subject matter of her husband's reading. From a study of the manuscripts and the books which were likely to have influenced Yeats when he composed the poems it is possible to discover many of the personal and literary sources of the published versions of the Byzantine poems. Where there is no proof available, such as the subsequent quotations from the early drafts and the accounts of pencilled comment and markings in the books in Yeats's library, possible sources have been suggested, or the general nature of the poet's material indicated. The poems are discussed chronologically; 'Sailing to Byzantium' was written in 1926, 'Byzantium' in 1930.

### I

#### 'Sailing to Byzantium'

The original drafts of this poem, preserved by Mrs. Yeats, are comparatively straightforward in their meaning, but 'Sailing to Byzantium' as it appeared in published form<sup>1</sup> needs much study before the full implications of its message become clarified.<sup>2</sup> The process by which an autobiographical record of a mood was altered into this complex symbolic poem can be seen from an examination of the draft versions.

The title of the original draft was 'Towards Byzantium' and its first stanza ran thus:

All in this land—my Maker that is play  
Or else asleep upon His Mother's knees,  
Others that as the mountain people say  
Are at their hunting and their gallantries  
Under the hills, as in our fathers' day  
The changing colours of the hills and seas  
All that men know or think they know, being young,  
Cry that my tale is told, my story sung.

<sup>1</sup> The poem first appeared in *October Blast*, by W. B. Yeats, published by the Cuala Press in June 1927.

<sup>2</sup> J. Crowe Ransom in 'The Irish, the Gaelic, the Byzantine' (*Southern Review*, 1942, p. 521) complains of the difficulty of assimilating 'all this magnificence at once'.



Yeats subsequently altered this stanza and a later version reads:

Here all is young; the chapel walls display  
 An infant sleeping on his Mother's knees,  
 Weary with toil Teig sleeps till break of day  
 This other wearied with night's gallantries  
 Sleeps the morning and the noon away  
 And I have toiled and loved until I slept  
 A slumbering labyrinth and leaves a snail  
 Scrawl upon the mirror of the soul.

The first stanza of the published version carries the alteration further. It removes any obvious personal connection between the poet and his theme, thus gaining a dramatic entry for the poet at the end of the second verse of the published version. In the two stanzas I have quoted above we can trace the gradual removal of the personal element. The first version is explicit with its complaint that, though Yeats is interested in life and beauty, he is considered too old to write of them. The second version attempts to hide Yeats's identity by introducing an invented character 'Teig', to give a combined air of mystery and reality. This is a dilution of the deeply personal note of the first draft; it paves the way for the general statement of the published version: 'That is no country for old men'.

At the same time the second stanza was altered and generalized out of recognition. Yeats first wrote directly:

I therefore travel towards Byzantium  
 Among these sun-brown pleasant mariners  
 Another dozen days and we shall come  
 Under the jetty and the marble stair

His next version began to stress the peculiarly ancient quality of Byzantium:

But now these pleasant dark-skinned mariners  
 Carry me towards that great Byzantium  
 Where all is ancient, singing at the oars  
 That I may look in the great church's dome  
 On gold-embedded saints and emperors  
 After the mirroring waters and the foam  
 Where the dark drowsy fins a moment rise  
 Of fish that carry souls to paradise.

The final version links the ancient city of Byzantium with the ageing poet in a more subtle fashion. Instead of a bald statement that the poet is travelling to Byzantium we have first the belief that

An aged man is but a paltry thing  
 A tattered coat upon a stick, unless  
 Soul clap its hands and sing . . .

The 'sensual music' of the first stanza does not suit the singing of the soul. (Yeats's peculiar use of 'That' in the first line of the poem tends to hide

the fact that the first stanza is a description of Ireland, as the rough drafts clearly demonstrate.) There follows, after the rejection of Ireland's sensual music, the more dramatic introduction of the poet and Byzantium together:

And therefore I have sailed the seas and come  
To the holy city of Byzantium.

Both are new elements in the poem, and their connection is established in the third and fourth stanzas.

The third and fourth stanzas were not greatly altered from the drafts, which ran as follows:

Transfigured saints that move amid the fire  
As in the gold mosaic of a wall  
Reform this heart and make it what you were  
Unwavering, (unfaltering), indifferent, fanatical,  
It faints upon the road sick with desire  
But fastened to this dying animal  
Or send the dolphins back and gather me  
Into the artifice of eternity.

The sensuous dream being past I shall not take  
A guttering form of nature's fashioning  
But rather that the Grecian smithies make  
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling  
At the Emperor's order for his lady's sake  
And set upon a golden bough to sing  
To lords and ladies of Byzantium  
Of what is past or passing or to come.

As a result of his rewriting Yeats built up a highly complex poem which does not disclose the subtleties of its construction at a casual reading. Once we discover the poet altering the first stanza so radically, we must ponder on the symbolic value of what he subsequently inserts. The first draft is near his deeply personal emotion. He is old, and, besides being worried over his future career as a poet, is probably envious of the fervour of human lovers. With his revision comes his desire for some degree of secrecy, and his wish to crystallize his thought on a more general plane. Thus there appear in the final version birds and fish instead of the young at 'their gallantries'. The same effect is gained, but by what methods? We might assume that these changes arose naturally out of the process by which Yeats made his verse, and owed their inception to the form of the poem. We could then explain the creation of the natural living birds as due to a desire on Yeats's part to have a thesis for the antithetical artificial and eternal bird. In the same way the salmon and mackerel may have been introduced to balance the subsequent dolphins who carry souls to Paradise. Yet if we consider the likely sources for these images it will seem that Yeats chose them because of their great personal associations as well as for

their symbolic value. He would remember that in Celtic legendry the salmon is used as a symbol of strength; the hero Cuchulain is renowned for his 'salmon leap', and his energy is compared to the flight of a bird. Some of the richness of the sensual music of the first verse is close to the mood of an Old Irish song of Summer:

The blackbird sings a loud strain  
To him the live word is a heritage  
The sad angry sea is fallen asleep  
The speckled salmon leaps.<sup>1</sup>

But blended with Yeats's knowledge of the salmon's symbolic meaning in Celtic poetry<sup>2</sup> was a subjective interest. His delight in watching salmon was perhaps increased by his keenness as a fisherman. He particularly wanted to show Mrs. Yeats, when she first visited Ireland after their marriage, the salmon under Galway Bridge.<sup>3</sup> There she was to see the lordly fish in great profusion waiting to leap their way upstream to spawn. This vigour of salmon was suggested in an early work,<sup>4</sup> where Hanrahan, one of Yeats's invented characters, a wild romantic lover,<sup>5</sup> sketches an ideal life of love thus: 'We will listen to the cuckoos, we will see the salmon leap in the rivers, we will sleep under the green oak leaves.'

The 'mackerel-crowded seas' may well be a youthful memory of the mackerel 'coming in' to some sea coast in Ireland; Yeats had memories of sea-fishing as well as of angling.<sup>6</sup>

There is another reason why the introduction of the natural fish and birds seems to have been due more to Yeats's personal interest in them than to any desire on his part to balance the form of his poem. Had he carried out his balanced descriptions of Ireland and Byzantium then the dolphins of the rough drafts would have remained in the final version of the poem. The removal of the dolphins and the vignette of Byzantium (the marble stair, the jetty, the Cathedral, etc.) is significant, especially as this material is used in 'Byzantium'. The reason for the removal of this imagery is suggested by a passage in a letter, dated 5 September, 1926, in which Yeats wrote to Mrs. Shakespear: 'There have been constant interruptions—the last time I wrote a poem about Byzantium to recover my spirits.'

Yeats, in fact, selected material from his general impression of historical Byzantium which was most concerned with his own situation. The marble

<sup>1</sup> From Kuno Meyer's *Old Irish Songs of Summer and Winter*.

<sup>2</sup> Yeats was well acquainted with all Kuno Meyer's translations of Irish poetry, in which he would have found many references to salmon. For another example cf. Kuno Meyer, *The Voyage of Bran*, p. 18, verse 38.

<sup>3</sup> George Moore (*Ave*, p. 137) has given an amusing account of Yeats bringing him to see the salmon at Galway.

<sup>4</sup> W. B. Yeats, *The Secret Rose*, p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> For Yeats's description of Hanrahan written in 1926, cf. 'The Tower', *Collected Poems*, p. 218.

<sup>6</sup> W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 90.

stair, the jetty and the Cathedral were not essential; they added nothing to the poet's account of his problem; as symbols they were more suited to the less directly subjective 'Byzantium'.<sup>1</sup> We may assume that the symbols which Yeats did retain in 'Sailing to Byzantium' possessed deep personal significance for him.

The 'sages standing in God's holy fire' of the third stanza are the martyrs in a Byzantine mosaic forming a frieze on the walls of S. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna (560 B.C.).<sup>2</sup> Yeats visited Ravenna in 1907<sup>3</sup> and saw the mosaic there. The transition of thought from the mosaic martyrs, the handiwork of creative artists, to the idea of eternity is centred in the word 'artifice', which, as C. M. Bowra points out, 'suggests that for Yeats this eternity is something that the poet makes for himself, a triumph of his art'.<sup>4</sup>

When we come to trace the sources from which Yeats drew his image of the eternal golden bird we are presented with a problem. The legend of the artificial tree with its artificial singing birds is widespread, but seems to have come from Byzantium. The earliest account is probably that provided by Georgius Syncellus, who places the tree's creation in the reign of the Emperor Theophilus: '... auream item arborem in qua insidentes avicillae ex quadam machina musice cantillabant...'.<sup>5</sup> Professor John Mavrogordato, for whose help in investigating the sources of this image I am extremely grateful, has pointed out to me that a distinction should be made between historical descriptions of the tree at Byzantium and those legends about a tree which appear in the general stock of European romance.<sup>6</sup> The subject of the Byzantine tree has been dealt with by M. Psichari<sup>7</sup> and M. Polites,<sup>8</sup> each of whom gives many references to descriptions of the tree and its singing birds. The best known account may well be that of Liudprand, who mentions the tree in the course of a description of the palace called Magnavra at Constantinople:

Before the Emperor's seat stood a tree, made of bronze gilded over, whose branches were filled with birds, also made of gilded bronze which uttered different cries, each according to its varying species...<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The very titles of the poems suggest their difference, one concerned with the personal reasons for going to Byzantium, the other a description of what the poet found there.

<sup>2</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Geoffrey Taylor for drawing my attention to Miss Gwendolen Murphy's note on this stanza in *The Modern Poet* (Sidgwick and Jackson), p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Hone, *W. B. Yeats 1865-1939*, p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> C. M. Bowra, *The Heritage of Symbolism*, p. 209.

<sup>5</sup> Georgius Syncellus (*Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae*, Ed. Niebuhr, vol. v., p. 793).

<sup>6</sup> He has also suggested that we might trace the common source of the two types of description of the tree back to Georgius Syncellus, who was translated into Slavonic. It is well-nigh impossible to indicate the definite relation of later descriptions to one or other of these main sources, though we might suggest that some were more likely to come from the Greek texts (e.g. the subsequently quoted passage from *Hero and Leander*).

<sup>7</sup> J. Psichari, 'L'Arbre Chantant'. *Quelques Travaux Helleniques, 1884-1928*, pp. 993 seq.

<sup>8</sup> M. Polites, *Laographie*, vol. vi, pp. 355-359.

<sup>9</sup> Liudprand, *Antapodosis*, vi, 5.

Mr. Neville Coghill has further suggested, as an example of the European romantic treatment of the tree, that given by Nashe in *The Unfortunate Traveller*.<sup>1</sup> The tree is a favourite motif in travellers' tales; it occurs in Clavijo's *Embassy to Tamerlane*<sup>2</sup> as well as in *The Book of Sir John Maundeville*.<sup>3</sup> Another example of artificial birds can be found in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, l. 33:

Where sparrows perched, of hollow pearl and gold,  
Such as the world would wonder to behold:  
Those with sweet water oft her handmaid fills,  
Which, as she went, would cherup through the bills.

With this multitude of sources<sup>4</sup> and absence of definite proof it is not possible to decide upon the one version which was used by Yeats.<sup>5</sup> In this case, as in most investigations of the sources of Yeats's poetry, it is more important to see the use which Yeats made of his material, for in his selection and emphasis lies his peculiar and poetic quality. Having selected the bird, he chose to add to its strangeness the possession of eternal life, the need for which had been felt so strongly when he began to write the poem.

## II

### 'Byzantium'

In his notes to *Collected Poems*<sup>6</sup> Yeats wrote that he had warmed himself back into life by writing 'Byzantium' and 'Veronica's Napkin'. The date for the poem's first emergence on to paper is given by an entry in the poet's 1930 Diary, recently published by the Cuala Press. This entry, dated 30 April, runs:

Subject for a poem . . . Describe Byzantium as it is in the system towards the end of the first Christian millenium. A walking mummy, flames at the street corners where the soul is purified, birds of hammered gold singing in the golden trees, in the harbour offering their backs to the wailing dead that they may carry them to Paradise. These subjects have been in my head for some time, especially the last.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Nashe, *The Unfortunate Traveller*, ed. H. F. Brett Smith, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> Clavijo, *Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406*, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Maundeville, *His Voyage and Travel (Early Travels in Palestine)*, ed. T. Wright, 1848, p. 235.

<sup>4</sup> Miss P. Gurd in *The Early Poetry of William Butler Yeats* (1916) suggests that an earlier mention of painted birds 'singing and keeping time with their feet and wings' (W. B. Yeats *Collected Works* [1908], vol. I, p. 191) is a reminiscence of Bran's Voyage to the Isle of Delight, and of St. Brendan's voyage. She refers to Sigerson as a source. (*Bards of the Gael and Gall*, p. 158; the correct reference, however, is to p. 144 of that work.)

<sup>5</sup> His note (*Collected Poems*, p. 446) upon the bird and the tree is characteristically vague: 'I have read somewhere that in the Emperor's palace at Byzantium was a tree made of gold and silver, and artificial birds that sang.'

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 451.

<sup>7</sup> W. B. Yeats, *Pages from a Diary written in Nineteen Hundred and Thirty*, p. 2.



The reference to 'the system' in Yeats's draft necessitates an examination of what he had written about Byzantium in *A Vision*. He gives an account of Byzantium which explains why he turned to this town as a subject for a poem:

I think that if I could be given a month of antiquity and leave to spend it where I chose, I would spend it in Byzantium a little before Justinian opened St. Sophia and closed the Academy of Plato. I think I would find in some little wine shop some philosophical worker in mosaic who could answer all my questions, the supernatural descending nearer him than Plotinus even, for the pride of his delicate skill would make what was an instrument of power to Princes and Clerics and a murderous madness in the mob, show as a lovely flexible presence like that of a perfect human body.

I think that in early Byzantium, and maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, and that architect and artificers—though not, it may be, poets, for language had been the instrument of controversy and must have grown abstract—spoke to the multitude and the few alike. The painter and the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of Sacred Books were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject matter and that the vision of a whole people. They could copy out of old gospel books those pictures that seemed the work of one, that made building, picture, pattern metal work of rail and lamp, seem but a single image; and this vision, this proclamation of their invisible master had the Greek nobility, Satan always the still half-divine serpent, never the horned scarecrow of the didactic Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup>

Yeats drew his first knowledge of Byzantine mosaic from the visit he made to Italy in 1907, but at the time when he was writing *A Vision* (1917–1925 approximately) he read several books upon Byzantium and its history. Most of his information came from *The Age of Justinian and Theodora* by W. G. Holmes, though he also read O. M. Dalton's *Byzantine Art and Archaeology*, as well as Mrs. Strong's *Apotheosis and After-Life*. The use he made of the information which he found in these books can be illustrated by an example. The word 'gong' was pencilled in the margin of the poet's copy of *The Age of Justinian and Theodora* opposite this description: 'At the boom of the great *semantron*, a sonorous board suspended in the porch of each church, and beaten with mallets by a deacon . . .'.<sup>2</sup> This passage, as the pencilled abridgment indicates, was the source for the fourth line of the first stanza, 'After great cathedral gong' and the last line of the first stanza, 'That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea'.

The allusion in the second stanza to 'Hades' bobbin' may be taken from Plato's imagery in the myth of Er,<sup>3</sup> as Yeats drew from this source for the 'spindle' of 'His Bargain',<sup>4</sup> another poem in *The Winding Stair*. He may

<sup>1</sup> W. B. Yeats, *A Vision*, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> W. G. Holmes, *The Age of Justinian and Theodora*, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *The Republic* (trans. Davies and Vaughan) § 620.

<sup>4</sup> W. B. Yeats, *Collected Poems*, p. 299.

also have been influenced by G. R. S. Mead, whose works he read enthusiastically, for Mead compares souls to spindles in 'The Vision of Aridaeus'.<sup>1</sup> Yeats's preliminary draft quoted above suggests that Hades' bobbin is a spirit.<sup>2</sup>

The artificial bird of the third stanza is the same as that which Yeats depicted in 'Sailing to Byzantium'. As in the earlier poem the bird is a symbol of eternity, but with the difference that here it is explicitly contrasted with natural birds, to their disadvantage. The tree is also compared with common trees, another touch neglected in the earlier poem. The 'star-lit' bough is doubtless so described because Yeats, in addition to imagining night as a romantic mysterious setting for his poem, generally associated Byzantium with the sciences of astrology and astronomy. In this stanza the adjective gives additional associations to the poem, as well as the simpler effect of richness implied by the mellow light on the golden bough, because the stars could be due to a recollection of the mosaic decoration of gold stars in a blue sky.

The 'Emperor's pavement' of the fourth stanza is probably derived from *The Age of Justinian and Theodora*; Yeats marked this passage<sup>3</sup> in the margin of his copy:

We . . . arrive at the Forum of Constantine, which presents itself as an expansion of the Mese. This open space, the most signal ornament of Constantinople, is called prescriptively the Forum; and, sometimes, from its finished marble floor 'The Pavement'.

The flames which Yeats envisaged as purificatory<sup>4</sup> may have been suggested by mosaics such as those from which the sages in 'Sailing to Byzantium' are summoned by the poet:

Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre  
And be the singing masters of my soul.

This, however, seems unlikely, as the only feature shared by the flames of the two poems is their holy character. The general idea of purification by fire seems likely to have been taken from some of the mystic or theosophical writers whom Yeats read with interest. We find, for instance, this description of the after-life in 'The Vision of Aridaeus':<sup>5</sup>

He said that the souls of the dead in passing from below upwards formed a flame-like bubble from which the air was excluded; then the bubble quietly broke and they came forth with man-like form.

This association of flames and souls seems to suit 'Byzantium', though

<sup>1</sup> G. R. S. Mead, *Echoes from the Gnosis*, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gwendolen Murphy, *The Modern Poet*, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> W. G. Holmes, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the initial draft of the poem.

<sup>5</sup> G. R. S. Mead, *Echoes from the Gnosis*, p. 18.

the transit of souls in 'Byzantium' is a slower process. Miss Murphy comments on this stanza :

Blood-begotten spirits probably human ghosts who, haunting the flame-mosaic pavement, are purged of their complexities of fury by its grandeur. The phrase describing them is a parenthesis, so that the account of the flames begotten of flame continues as 'Dying into a dance'.<sup>1</sup>

The dolphins of the last stanza came from Mrs. Strong's account of the symbolic functions of these fish in the ancient world. She writes that

Lycian art recognized various other vehicles of the soul's ultra-mundane journey. The Nereids, for instance, of the slightly earlier monument from Xanthos, what are they but souls borne to another sphere by the marine monsters which we see beneath the feet of the gracious maidens? These are the same creatures of the deep that escort the soul on countless Roman tombs.<sup>2</sup>

Dolphins are specifically mentioned later: the dolphin is an 'emblem of the soul or its transit.'<sup>3</sup> Again, more explicitly, she states that 'the dead man—or his soul—might be conveyed thither either by boat, or on the back of a sea-monster, a dolphin, sea-horse, or triton . . .'<sup>4</sup> Dolphins in the after-life are again described by Yeats in 'News for the Delphic Oracle'.<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Yeats considers that Yeats used Mrs. Strong's book as a source for the dolphins of 'Byzantium'. Smithies are mentioned in *The Age of Justinian and Theodora*,<sup>6</sup> as well as the almost excessive gilding<sup>7</sup> which was executed at Byzantium. Doubtless Yeats would have asserted that the smithies had made the golden bird.

<sup>1</sup> Gwendolen Murphy, *The Modern Poet*, p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Strong, *Apotheosis and After-Life*, p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> W. B. Yeats, *Last Poems & Plays*, p. 59.

<sup>6</sup> W. G. Holmes, *The Age of Justinian and Theodora*, p. 69.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

R. E. S., VOL. 18, 1942 (N<sup>o</sup> 71, JULY, pp. 316, 317)

Professor Maas, in defending the reading 'inductionious' of the first two quartos of *Richard III* (1.1.32), as against 'inductions', the reading of the third quarto and all late editions, and adding a hyphen, so that the line reads 'Plots have I laid inductionious-dangerous', and while citing Marston's citation of the line in *Parasitaster* II, 1 (1606) with 'inductions', makes no mention of the pertinent use of this noun in two places in *The Atheist's Tragedy* (1611):

1. After the murder of Belforest in Act II, D'Amville says to his instrument Borachio:

1. Marke the plot. Not any circumstance  
That stood within the reach of the designe,  
Of persons, dispositions, matter, time or place,  
But by this braine of mine, was made  
An Instrumentall help; yet nothing from  
Th' induction to th' accomplishment seem'd forc'd,  
Or done o' purpose, but by accident.

2. In Act III the imprisoned Charlemont says to his reliever Sebastian:  
No. Since I must submit my selfe to Fate; I neuer will neglect the offer of one benefit; but entertaine them as her fauours; and th' inductions to some end of better fortune.

These passages, with the blank verse correctly divided, will be found on p. 204 and p. 222 of Professor Allardyce Nicoll's *The Works of Cyril Tourneur* (1929). The word bears the same meaning in both cases, as the first step in a train of events. Professor Maas says that the adjective *inductionious* was 'rare and becoming obsolete', yet the only instance he quotes is a non-dramatic one as late as 1620. Can any lover of English poetry believe in 'inductionious-dangerous' in a serious verse passage? Its cacophony finds no parallel in Richard III's 'childish-foolish' (1.iii.142), which does not come at the end of the line, and surely it is more reasonable to suppose that John Marston was quoting what he had heard on the stage rather than what he had read in a playbook. The correction of the third quarto is consonant with dramatic usage; 'inductionious-dangerous' might be just possible in the mouth of Polonius, but in that of no other personage in Shakespeare. Away with it! 'Inductions does not construe with laid.' It is in apposition to 'plots' which it defines, and a slight pause after 'laid' is made by every actor I have seen in the part of Richard.

E. H. W. MEYERSTEIN.

# MATTHEW ARNOLD IN TWO SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATIONS

1. *The Balliol Scholarship.* On 23 November, 1840, Matthew Arnold started to compete for an Open Scholarship at Balliol College, Oxford.<sup>1</sup> Open Scholarships were then comparatively rare at Oxford, and those at Balliol appealed to the best schoolboy ability in the land. *Puer egregius, vir mediocris*; nevertheless, such names as the following, elected to Balliol Open Scholarships within a few years on either side of Arnold, are still remembered: A. P. Stanley, B. Jowett, A. H. Clough, J. D. Coleridge, C. S. Blayds (afterwards Calverley).

The competition was for two places.<sup>2</sup> The first place was won with some ease by James Riddell, whose death in early middle life was a serious loss to classical studies. The second place was won by Matthew Arnold after an unusually fierce contest with two other candidates. For this information we are indebted to the very fierceness of the contest, which was such as to excite a good deal of local interest and catch the eye of a *Times* correspondent. The result was the following paragraph:

The contest for the two scholarships which were given at Oxford last week was the most exciting and severe that has occurred for many years. Not less than 33 candidates appeared to contend for the honour of obtaining a Balliol scholarship, which is justly held in high estimation among the Oxonians. Of these, seven were from Eton, five from Rugby, and two from Winchester. Mr. Pott and Mr. Arnold, the son of Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, were, to use a sporting phrase, the favourites, and odds were freely offered on them. After a prolonged and unusually difficult examination, the whole of the candidates assembled at 10 a.m. on Friday morning [November 27] to hear the final award, when, to the surprise of all, the Dean announced, that it having been found impossible to arrive at any decision, in consequence of the equal merits of some of the competitors, those most distinguished were to undergo a *viva voce* examination. This renewed struggle was confined to the gentlemen already named, together with Mr. Riddle, of Shrewsbury, and Mr. de Butts, a son of General de Butts. This second trial added greatly to the intense excitement that had throughout the morning pervaded the courts of Alma Mater. After a long and highly exciting interval of suspense, the doors of the Common-hall were again thrown open for the admission of the four rivals, who were followed by an immense crowd of men from every college. The tumult was gradually hushed, and succeeded by a profound silence, upon which the Dean rose and gave the long-suspended judgment in favour of Messrs Arnold and Riddle, both of whom are Rugby men. Mr. Pott is an Etonian, and Mr. de Butts is residing [? reading] with a private tutor. Although finally shaken off, they had the honour of being placed; the remaining 29 were nowhere.<sup>3</sup>

(From a correspondent.)

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 9 November, 1840, p. 3. Announcement of forthcoming examination.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 5 December, 1840, p. 3.



Apart from minor errors manifest upon the surface, this account is wrong in attaching the contest to the first place instead of to the second, and consequently in including Riddell. The error was pointed out a few days later by a correspondent writing anonymously but privately denoting 'authority which is unquestionable':

The very searching examination which took place on the occasion alluded to decidedly proved the superior scholarship of Mr. Riddell, of Shrewsbury school, over all the other candidates, and, in consequence, there existed no doubt among the electors as to awarding him a scholarship; the only doubt which existed at all was with respect to the individual who should be appointed to the other vacant scholarship; whence arose the necessity for the second examination, the result of which was, the election of Mr. Arnold, of Rugby school, to that distinction.<sup>1</sup>

Matthew Arnold's faulty obituary article in *The Times*,<sup>2</sup> which has been responsible for the wide propagation of more than one error, declares that he 'won the open scholarship at Balliol College with great *éclat*'. The 'great *éclat*' is, however, significant.

2. *The Hertford Latin Scholarship*. This Scholarship, awarded annually for proficiency in Latin, is open to members of Oxford University who have not completed two years from their matriculation. The examination for which Matthew Arnold entered commenced on 7 March, 1842.<sup>3</sup> He was again destined to take second place, this time in a tie. The common mis-statement<sup>4</sup> that he won the Scholarship originated in the *Times* obituary article already mentioned,<sup>5</sup> whence it passed into the *Annual Register*, 1888,<sup>6</sup> and into Mallet's *History of the University of Oxford*.<sup>7</sup>

The examiners' announcement of the result is as follows:

#### OXFORD, MARCH 12

Yesterday the Examiners of the candidates for the University scholarship for the encouragement of Latin literature notified to the Vice-Chancellor that they had awarded it to Mr. Goldwin Smith, commoner, of Christ Church, and that Messrs. M. Arnold, of Balliol College, and George G. Bradley, of University College, had honourably distinguished themselves in the examination. There were 28 candidates for this scholarship.<sup>8</sup>

Goldwin Smith carried off three more University classical prizes, as well as the Chancellor's English Essay prize, before becoming Regius Professor of Modern History.<sup>9</sup> Bradley won the Latin Essay prize in 1845, and eventually became Master of University College, Oxford.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, 11 December, 1840, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 April, 1888, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 February, 1842, p. 3. Announcement of forthcoming examination.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. in the biographies by H. Kingsmill (1928, p. 47), C. H. Harvey (1931, p. 19), and L. Trilling (1939, p. 19).

<sup>5</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> Part ii, p. 142.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. III, p. 354 n.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 14 March, 1842, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Oxford Historical Register, 1220-1900*, p. 848.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 613.

In speaking of Oxford as a place 'where, according to their own established standards of distinction, I did so little',<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold doubtless had in mind his seemingly fatal attraction to the second place as exemplified by these two examinations and, of course, by his second class in Greats. As a poet he may not have thought much of winning the Newdigate. But of his Balliol Scholarship and of his tying with G. G. Bradley as a Latinist, he might have said: *Valeat quantum*. J. P. CURGENVEN.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### MASSON'S DIAGRAM OF MILTON'S SPACES

Mr. B. A. Wright (*R.E.S.*, January 1945, pp. 42-4) lay on Masson's diagram the responsibility for what he considers a general misreading of *Paradise Lost*, I, 73-4:

As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n  
As from the Center thrice to th' utmost Pole.

But the diagram of Masson cannot be loaded with all the blame. Years before Masson (as Mr. Wright himself notes) commentators had reached the conclusion that by 'utmost Pole' Milton must be meaning, not the pole of the earth, but the pole of the global universe that formed his system within the poem; and Newton for his part (although he does not bother to draw a map or work out all the implications) would seem to be taking the lines nearly as literally as Masson did.

I would suggest that the truth in this case is not (as Mr. Wright would have it) that the critics have shown themselves even denser than usual, but that Milton on his side rather bungles what he was about, and that the critics on the whole have done quite reasonably well.

The classical parallels are not as helpful, surely, as Mr. Wright implies. If you wish to give an earth-dweller an idea of some distance quite transcending anything he has ever experienced it is a natural thing to say to him (as Homer and Virgil do) that it is as far, or that it is twice as far, as the sky is from the earth. It is *not* natural, in exactly that way, to begin talking about 'centres' and 'poles' and of three times the distance between them. And when we find that Milton very soon after this goes on to talk with technical exactitude of 'poles' again (III, 560) and of other matters of the same kind, it is not surprising if we infer, on a balance of probabilities, that in the previous passage also he was really meaning (for the moment, at all events) to give genuine astronomical distances and to talk with precision.

Mr. Wright says that Milton, like Homer, chooses to give the effect of the distance 'in an imaginative manner, that is by an appeal to human

<sup>1</sup> *Letters* ii, 31.

experience'. But that is the very point of the difference and the source of the difficulty. Homer appeals to human experience; Milton does not: he appeals to a technical diagram of the universe; and that is why critics have been troubled to know exactly what he meant and how literally he meant it.

A. J. A. WALDOCK.

*Professor Wright, to whom this letter was submitted replies:—*

I do not dispute, as Mr. Waldock seems to suggest, that by 'utmost pole' Milton means the pole of the stellar universe; what I dispute is that he is using this cosmic measuring rod to inform us that 'the distance of Hell-Gate from Heaven-Gate is exactly three semidiameters' of this universe. Newton may have taken the lines as literally as Masson, but he does not say so; the reason for concentrating on Masson is that he was explicit, and that his description of Milton's spaces, with its accompanying diagram, has been adopted as correct. If correct, no blame to him at all for being plain.

Mr. Waldock thinks that Milton 'appeals to a technical diagram of the universe': that is precisely the habit of thought I attack and which I attribute to Masson's influence. Why is it less natural, in Mr. Waldock's sense, for a poet to talk of centres and poles than of earth and sky? Those were poetical words in familiar use in the time of Shakespeare and Milton; they evidently did appeal to human experience, as expressing the utmost reach of thought. The 'sky' of Homer and Virgil was on the other hand just as technical a term as Milton's 'pole', i.e. a term in their cosmology; that does not disable its poetical use any more than it disables the poetical use of 'poles' in Marlowe's line,

All things that move between the quiet poles.

Mr. Waldock however objects that Milton talks of poles with technical precision; here he seeks to beg the whole question by confusing the exact use of the word with the purpose or effect to which it is used—whether to fix the thought to an abstract mathematical point or to release the imagination in the voids of interstellar space.

Mr. Waldock thinks that Milton bungled, whereas I hold that any possible interpretation that shows him as not bungling is the one we must accept. How else can we wretched critics be said to do 'reasonably well'? Milton needed a metaphor to convey the idea of unmeasurable distance: is there a more adequate one than that of the farthest astronomical distance? And does not the hyperbolical 'thrice' serve to indicate that it is a metaphor, not to be taken literally? Is it for us to persist in making literal nonsense of the poet's words when we can make poetical sense? That is the issue. In the seventh book Milton resorts to this very metaphor again in order to

suggest the immeasurable confusion of Chaos, when Christ stands at the open gate of Heaven (as Satan stood at the open gates of Hell) viewing

the vast immeasurable Abyss  
 Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wilde,  
 Up from the bottom turn'd by furious windes  
 And surging waves, as Mountains to assault  
 Heavn's highth, and with the Center mix the Pole.

Chaos, of course, has no centre or pole: are we to say that Milton has bungled again?

B. A. WRIGHT.

### SHAKESPEARE AND JONSON

Your October number contains an able review by Dr. Simpson of what is evidently an interesting and important book by Professor G. E. Bentley, which I regret I have not yet seen. I write because I think that the review at any rate may give a one-sided impression of the relative reputations of Shakespeare and Jonson unless the evidence of quotation and allusion is supplemented by that of printing. Both men were primarily dramatists, so I will confine myself to plays. Take first those separately printed; and in order to exclude the late so-called 'players' quartos' in which several Shakespearian plays were reprinted, let us stop at the Restoration. Of Shakespeare's we have nineteen plays (excluding the very popular *Pericles*) with a total of 66 editions (*Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* running to five editions each, *Richard II* to six, *Richard III* to eight, and 1 *Henry IV* to nine) giving an average of almost  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . Of Jonson's we have eleven plays with a total of 16 editions, an average of under  $1\frac{1}{2}$  (the only plays to run to more than a single edition were *Every Man out of his Humour* and *Catiline* with three each, and *Epicene* with two, one of which is lost). Next take the collected editions. Ben Jonson himself published his works up to date in 1616; a few years after his death this volume was reprinted and was supplemented by another of hitherto uncollected works; in 1692 the whole was reprinted in one volume. Shakespeare's plays remained uncollected till 1623, but four editions appeared between then and 1685. We are told that only in the last twenty years of the century did Shakespeare's reputation catch up with Jonson's; yet if we omit these years, the contradiction is even more glaring. Jonson's earlier plays were printed twice, his later only once. Shakespeare's were all printed three times—say twice as often. Writers might praise and quote Jonson; it was Shakespeare that people read. And that is why, as Dr. Simpson mentions, there are many more allusions to Shakespeare's *characters* than to Jonson's.

W. W. GREG.

## REVIEWS

**Les éléments latins dans la poésie religieuse de Cynewulf.** By MARGUERITE-MARIE DUBOIS. Paris: Droz. 1943. Pp. 222.

**Aelfric: sermonnaire, docteur et grammairien. Contribution à l'étude de la vie et de l'action bénédictine en Angleterre au X<sup>e</sup> siècle.** By MARGUERITE-MARIE DUBOIS. Paris: Droz. 1943. Pp. VIII+419.

It is a pleasure to welcome from France these two books, produced under difficult circumstances. They encourage us, testifying to the continued interest taken by continental scholars in English studies. The names mentioned with gratitude in the prefaces remind us what these scholars have already done: L. Cazamian, G. Le Bras, Canon Couturier, the late Dom Gougaud, and others. They were published almost at the same time as F. M. Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England*, and just after D. Knowles' *Monastic Order in England*.

Dr. Dubois tells us that her purpose is to give, in a single work, the result of all the studies made by philologists of the sources and Latin themes which underlie the writings of Cynewulf. Her task, however, was not confined within such modest limits. The book marks a real advance in our knowledge of this field of inquiry, and its pages are packed with scholarly information of every kind on Anglo-Saxon poetry. The author only treats of the authentic poems, reserving for a future volume the study of the anonymous works sometimes attributed to Cynewulf. The first chapter, on the person of the poet, sets forth all the current theories as to his place of origin and the period in which he lived. Like F. M. Stenton, Dr. Dubois accepts his Mercian origin as well-nigh certain, and dates the poems between 750 and 800 (*Elene* probably between 770-799, since the author's name is spelt in it with median *e*. A new edition of this poem is being prepared by Miss P. O. E. Gradon). The second chapter is devoted largely to a discussion of the runes. The author then comes to her main object. The sources of the four signed poems: *Juliana*, *Elene*, *Crist*, and the *Fata*, are inventoried under the names of the scholars who discovered them (some new and interesting suggestions, particularly with regard to scripture passages, are made by Dr. Dubois), and then classified under: biblical, patristic, liturgical, and hagiographical sources. The poet's use of these sources is then dealt with, his own personal contribution and his originality. The Conclusion treats of Latin culture in Anglo-Saxon England. The knowledge of medieval Latin literature required by such a work is immense, and it is likely that specialists in the various branches will have criticisms to make. We regret that the author misunderstood H. A. Wilson's edition of the Gregorian mass-book, confusing the Roman sacramentary of St. Gregory the Great, whose collect for St. Agatha (also found in the Gelasian book—Vatic. MS. Regin. 316) may well have been the source of Cynewulf's prayer to Juliana, with Alcuin's supplement to it composed at a later date for use in Frankish lands. Her incidental remarks on p. 83 about the use of the 'Roman' psalter in England call for greater precision; and instead of mentioning the St. Germain psalter (Bibl. Nat. lat. MS.



11947) which has nothing to do with England, it would have been preferable to use English psalters, such as B. M. Vespasian A1, and others.

To pass from Cynewulf to Aelfric is not merely a transition from the realm of poetry to that of prose, but also from hypothesis to well-ascertained fact. Aelfric of Eynsham, the pupil of Ethelwold at the Old Minster, is as well known to students of monastic history as to specialists in Anglo-Saxon literature as an important link in the 'continuity of English prose'. It is to be wondered at therefore that there has been so far no modern biography of Aelfric, although there are many studies on various aspects of his work, chief among them being Kenneth Sisam's series of articles in *R.E.S.* (1931-3), to which Dr. Dubois expresses her indebtedness. Her researches have resulted in a piece of solid scholarship regarding the history and culture of England in the tenth century—a book having all the characteristics of a definitive work on the life and literary labours of Aelfric. The first three chapters are concerned with his life at Winchester, at Cerne, and at Eynsham. Then follow two chapters on his teaching to laymen, and to the clergy. Chapter 6 sets out at length, and comments upon, his doctrine. His translations from Latin, as well as his didactic method and his astronomical works are the subjects of the next three chapters; chapter 10 and the Conclusion treat of the master's influence on Wulstan, Byrhtferth, and literature down to Chaucer, as well as on English spirituality. There are four facsimile reproductions of manuscripts: a page from the *Vita Aethelwoldi* (Bibl. Nat. lat. 5362), the *De falsis Deis* (7585), the homily *De Dedicatione Ecclesiae* (943), and from the Latin grammar (*ibid.*, MS. Angl. 67).

A copious bibliography terminates each volume, but, besides the notable omission from the first of K. Young's *Drama of the Medieval Church*, there is a certain inaccuracy in the titles. Those who are irritated by printers' errors will find much to annoy them. Thus, H. Sweet's well-known vol. 83 in the E.E.T.S. becomes: The Old-English Texts; Hyde Abbey, Hide; Professor Löwe's initials, E. S.; Green the historian's, G. R.; and, despite the assurance on p. 11, it is doubtful whether the author actually consulted the 40th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. The translations of Cynewulf into French prose, which Dr. Dubois wisely preferred to verse, are very pleasant although the geniuses of the two languages are so entirely different.

G. D. SCHLEGEL, O.S.B.

**Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century.** By JOHN R. H. MOORMAN, B.D. Cambridge, at the University Press. 1945. Pp. xxviii+444. 25s. net.

Mr. Moorman, whose father's works will be known to readers of this *Review*, has himself established his reputation with his *Sources for the Life of St. Francis*. The present book is less a work of original research than a careful summary of the evidence to be derived from printed material. The general reader, looking at the bibliography, will be surprised at the number of bishops' registers and monastic annals which are now available in print owing to the good work of the Canterbury and York Society and many county historical and archaeological societies. Special points, too, have been examined by such mediaevalists as Professor Hamilton Thompson, Dr. A. G. Little, Dr. E. F. Jacob, Mr. C. R. Cheney and the late Mr. R. A. L. Smith.

Mr. Moorman has chosen the thirteenth century as the great mediaeval

period; the monasteries were, indeed, already past their prime, and the best men were drawn to the universities and the mendicant orders, both of them in their first ardour. The general impression derived from this book is perhaps less favourable than one would have expected. As in Dr. Coulton's books, the darker aspects are more prominently displayed, though Mr. Moorman fairly says what can be said in defence of the wide-spread existence of pluralities, non-residence, and papal provisions. He gives some astounding examples of pluralities. Bogo de Clare had amassed before his death five cathedral dignities and twenty-four parishes: he was as greedy and extravagant as his father, the 7th Earl of Gloucester, and he is hardly recognizable in the *D.N.B.* description: 'Boso, or Bono "the good", a canon of York'. But it is hard on Thomas Cantilupe, afterwards canonized, to couple him with Bogo. It is true that by the time he became Bishop of Hereford he was possessed of five cathedral dignities and at least ten livings, but, unlike Bogo, he took care to provide suitable vicars and himself regularly visited all his cures. And if there were abuses, there were also notable reformers among the bishops, such as Robert Grosseteste. The dioceses were so vast and the means of travelling so onerous that many instances of neglect escaped the notice of even a vigilant bishop or of the *oculus episcopi*, the arch-deacon. The bishops at least ensured that, when parochial endowments were impropriated by monasteries, a living wage was secured to the parish priest by the 'ordination' of a vicarage.

In a work of such detail a few slips are inevitable, though the general standard of accuracy is high. William of Blois is twice named as Bishop of Winchester, but on other pages his see is correctly given as Worcester. It is hardly correct to state that the election of bishops in ten of the seventeen sees lay with monastic chapters; in two of the ten, Bath & Wells and Lichfield & Coventry, it was a conjoint election by a Benedictine monastery and a secular chapter. In describing the secular chapter as consisting of canons, the dean is strangely omitted. In the account of monastic and cathedral libraries there should be fuller mention of canon law, which was widely studied. It would be unwise to accept without reserve Mr. Moorman's reckoning of the modern equivalent of the mediaeval sums which he quotes. On two pages *veniality* appears where *venality* is intended.

Readers of *The Canterbury Tales* and *Piers Plowman* will find much in this picture of the day-to-day life of parish priest, monk, friar and lay-folk, to illustrate those works. Without such help it is hard for anyone to-day to realize how large a part the mediaeval church played in English life, when every twelfth adult male was in orders of some degree, and when the authority of the church over the people was almost as pervasive and irresistible as that of the state.

F. E. HUTCHINSON.

**The Origin of the Grail Legend.** By ARTHUR C. L. BROWN. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; London: Humphrey Milford. 1943. Pp. x+476. \$5.00; 28s. net.

This erudite work is distractingly obscure and inconclusive. The reviewer hardly knows what to say, so baffling is the combination of authoritative and convinced assertion with lines of argument which convey scarcely a shred of definite proof.

The author's aim is to demonstrate the Irish origins of Arthurian legend in general and of the Grail legend in particular. Key incidents from Old Irish

literary sources are related in detail, and are compared with kindred themes from the Welsh. So far there is no need to cavil. The author, as Celticist, stands on his own ground. He concludes this section of his work as follows:

Having established our scenario upon a solid basis of ancient Irish and Welsh documents, our next concern is with the French romances. Since Chrétien is the author of the oldest French romances that have come down to us, any attempt to explain the origin of Arthurian romance must centre round these. All others are later and may be influenced by his. The task before us is to search for the scenario of a Journey to Fairyland in Chrétien's romances.

It is in the carrying out of this task that the author's thesis shows itself full of cracks. True, he seeks to disarm our criticism in advance by admitting that 'no startling resemblances between Chrétien's romances and Irish stories are to be anticipated'. He continues:

Chrétien, no doubt, has changed nearly all his stories into type III (Enchanted Princess) and has explained all marvels as a result of enchantment; his aim was to adapt his stories to the sophisticated taste of twelfth-century France. Under these conditions parallels between Irish stories and Chrétien's romances are not obvious but must be arrived at by study.

We note the word 'study'. And we deny the equation of this with arbitrary speculation and loose opinion, which in most cases is all we are offered. No one will contest the presence of genuine Celtic elements in Arthurian legend; but the author's thesis goes far beyond what has hitherto been accepted, without, however, any irrefutable proof of the synthesis he claims to establish.

Here are a few examples of the method of argument. There is no unfairness in lifting them from their contexts, since these are made up of the same precarious stuff.

The multiplicity of Hospitable Hosts encountered by Perceval is best explained not only be a device of repetition but by a hypothesis that two or more journeys to Fairyland have been attached together. (P. 117)

If the Grail castle and Blancheflor's castle are interchanged, it will make the plot of the first part of *Perceval*, Y,Z, closely resemble that of *Yvain*, W. (P. 123)

Our hypothesis that Gornemant and the Fisherman are manifestations of one character, namely the god Brion, explains why neither has a wife. (P. 158)

Nuadu's chief attribute was a sword. The same is true of Arthur. (P. 312)

Of Arthur, yes. And of how many others?

The accounts of the French romances of Chrétien and of the German *Parzival*, while correct enough in the main, are not impeccable. For instance:

My hypothesis that Camlan is in the past and that Arthur is leading an enchanted life in some castle belonging to the land of the dead explains his inactivity in all of Chrétien's romances, as for example at the beginning of *Erec* and of *Yvain*. (Pp. 107-8)

But in *Erec* and *Yvain* King Arthur is not the 'roi fainéant' of later romances; he is, in fact, a reasonably active monarch. If at the beginning of *Yvain* he is represented as taking a midday nap, this form of inactivity is, after all, quite human.

It is impossible not to smile at the publisher's remark that 'the book establishes several conceptions which are quite different from those usually taught in histories of literature'. Histories of literature have their own shortcomings: but does not the very word 'history' excuse the defect referred to?

We admit our inability to accept Professor Brown's thesis. Much, however, can be gained indirectly from the rich store of legendary material he has set before us.

MARGARET F. RICHEY.

**The Crooked Rib. An Analytical Index to the Argument about Women in English and Scots Literature to the end of the Year 1568.** By FRANCIS LEE UTLEY. Pp. xiv + 368. Columbus: The Ohio State University. 1944. \$4.00.

The sub-title explains the nature of this work. It is an index of 403 works, chiefly in verse, which carry on the *querelle des femmes*, the satirical attack on women and the answer to it, down to 1568. They range in length from the Holly and Ivy songs to the *The Two Mariit Women and the Wedo*, and in quality from *The Wife of Bath's Prologue* to *Gyl of Braintford's Testament*. They form a literary genre not so well defined as the Allegory of Love or the popular Ballad or the Carol; still, they can be classified and their affiliations traced. They are worthy of study for their literary merit and for the light they throw on human society and the workings of the human mind. Before such a study can be properly founded the best texts must be discovered and set out in array. To this end the author has searched them out in manuscript or in original print all over Britain and America, even to the Register of Sasines in the Town Clerk's Office, Aberdeen, or has had micro-films made of them, or has been able to see micro-films of them through that astonishing project of the Edwards Brothers (of which I had not heard before) which has set out to micro-film English books published before 1600 and supply them to libraries. Only in a few instances has he had to be content with second-hand examination. He names the various manuscripts in which a satire or *defense* occurs, indicates differences, describes the verse-forms, outlines the contents, and where it is little known, or where it has roused discussion, he comments without regard to space. For instance the note on *The Scholehouse* (1541) runs to seven pages, and in many entries there is much curious and out-of-the-way information. Professor Utley has added an Index of Short Titles and an Index cataloguing some 230 manuscripts under the headings of the various libraries, and listing the many theses, articles, books, and pamphlets in which, during the last twenty years or so, scholars, American, English, French, German, Spanish, have dealt with the *querelle des femmes*. The book is an example of the precision and industry of modern American scholarship. It will be a valuable and indeed, one may unhesitatingly add, an indispensable work of reference.

The long Introduction discusses various aspects of the genre. In Chapter I the author opposes the view often put forward in histories of literature, that these satires on women were due to Orientalism, or to their being written by clerics or by members of the strong new bourgeoisie of the Middle Ages: one must take into account the strut of the male, the influence of Ovid and Juvenal, the love of jest. In fact, the impulses behind these satires are very like those of any other period. What gives them their peculiar character is that they flow into certain literary conventions: in reading them one must remember that they are all, as it were, bits and pieces of a great literary game. Though Goliardic poetry is lacking in the reverence for women we find in Dante and Lord Tennyson we must not conclude that the wandering scholars invariably lived dissolute lives. About the middle of the sixteenth century the game came to an end, and the bits and pieces,



like Sancho's chessmen, were thrown into the bag. When they were taken out again, it was for larger stakes: the Lying Song became *Go and catch a falling star*, the Nut-Brown Maid and her Lad became Beatrice and Benedick.

The argument and illustrations are helpful: they touch many poems both medieval and renaissance, with points of light. At times, perhaps, Professor Utley tends to over-emphasize. Making his point that there are satirical passages about women in all literatures, he reminds us that the Ghost of Agamemnon in his speech to Ulysses over the trench, counselled him to keep Penelope in her place.

The leader himself, Agamemnon, speaks from personal experience when he says in Hades 'there is nothing so cruel and shameless as a woman', and warns Odysseus that even though Penelope is something of an improvement on Clytemnestra he should still keep his masculine counsel. These satirical nuggets are a corrective to the idealised portraits of Andromache and Helen; we must include them in the ledger when we estimate the views of Homer (p. 23).

But there is much more than 'satirical nuggets' in Chaucer and Dunbar. If ever I made a ledger for Homer, I would write out all the passages about Andromache and Helen in full, and degrade Ulysses' counsel to the foot of the page.

Chapter 2 (pp. 39-53) describes the various forms the satire and *defense* took — the *chanson d'aventure*, the *chanson de mal marié*, the *débat*, the bird *débat*, the proverb, the lying song, the song of revolt, and so on through many varieties and sub-varieties. Chapter 3 (pp. 53-90) traces with detailed references to the Index the rise and decline of the genre.

W. D. TAYLOR.

**Endymion in England. The Literary History of a Greek Myth.** By EDWARD S. LE COMTE. New York: King's Crown Press. 1944. Pp. iv+189. \$ 2.25.

This is a contribution of some importance to the study of classical influence in English Literature. The first part of the dissertation recalls the separate occurrences of the Endymion myth in classical literature and provides a composite view of its several features. Attempts to interpret the myth follow, in which the conflict of authorities leads to Krappe's conclusion that the myth is *charmant mais obscur*, but that 'its obscurity is no small part of its charm'. The reader not specially versed in the classics will be particularly grateful for the spadework of these opening chapters.

The minor parts of the myth, as well as its heart, were early available in Renaissance handbooks, 'and there was no minor part in which some literary Elizabethan did not display some interest'. Beyond a few well-known generalities Mr. Le Comte says little of the handbooks and their use by writers, an important and comparatively untilled field. Literary models and parallel passages, continental as well as English and classical, are given fuller measure; Mr. Le Comte appears to be the first to notice in detail the indebtedness of D'Urfey's opera, *Cynthia and Endimion*, to Lyly's comedy. The portions on Lyly and on Keats contain a valuable survey of the allegorical problems presented by these two writers and of the most reasonable attempts at solution.

The English material might have been regarded less from the viewpoint of a mythologist and more from that of a student of literature. The characteristics of different authors and periods, expressed in the varied treatment of the myth, could have been a more constant theme. There would have been less tendency for the argument to lose itself in trivial issues and trivial examples.



The reference value of the dissertation, which is likely to be little used for continuous reading, would have been increased by a classified bibliography and an extension of the index, which is unanalytic and restricted to authors and commentators. The documentation is unusually faithful and copious, and for this very reason valuable material is entangled in the undergrowth of footnotes.

J. P. CURGENVEN.

**The Life and Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle.** By LOUIS TRENCHARD MORE. New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1944; London: Oxford University Press, 1945. Pp. xii+313. \$4.50; 21s. net.

The increasing attention that has been paid in recent years to the background of literature is perhaps nowhere more fully justified than in the case of the seventeenth century. To understand the complex intellectual and spiritual atmosphere in which seventeenth-century literature was written, and particularly the influence of the 'new philosophy' which 'called all in doubt', it is necessary to explore with more assiduity than is perhaps congenial to many readers the line of country so ably surveyed by Mr. Basil Willey in his *Seventeenth-Century Background*. Mr. More's present study of Boyle can be recommended for its illumination of many aspects of that background.

Boyle was far more the formulator of Boyle's Law. In Mr. More's opinion, one could hardly find another Englishman so typical of his age:

As a humanist, he strove to preserve a just balance between worldliness and other-worldliness, and yet he unconsciously fostered the ever-accelerating preponderance of science over religion; he is rightly called the innovator of modern chemistry, and yet he remained an ardent alchemist; he was a convinced mechanistic corpuscularian, and, at the same time, he ascribed mystical powers to nature and believed his life was directed by Divine Providence; in politics, he wavered between allegiance to the absolute authority of the king and the popular rights of the commonwealth; in religion, he rejected both Papacy and Calvinism and found contentment in the *via media* of the Anglican Church with its authority restricted to matters essential to salvation. By his contemporaries, he was affectionately portrayed as 'The Christian Gentleman'.

It is perhaps this multiplicity of interests on his part which has deterred biographers from tackling Boyle. Since Thomas Birch's eighteenth-century editions of Boyle's *Works*, with their prefatory biographical sketch, there has been one chatty narrative of his life but no serious biography. Mr. More has now filled the gap with versatility and skill.

The first half of the volume gives a clear picture of Boyle's career and character. A younger son of the great Earl of Cork, with all the advantages of rank, influence, and modest wealth, he nevertheless chose the private life of the scholar, avoiding active participation in the troubled politics of his day, refusing all the offers of high preferment in the Church which his reputation in theology induced, and declining even such public office as the presidency of the Royal Society, which was inevitably pressed upon him as the acknowledged leader of contemporary English scientists.

To his analysis of Boyle's works Mr. More brings a wide range of learning. Of the early works, which are for the most part religious or moralizing, the most significant is *Some Considerations Touching the Style of the Holy Scripture*, an essay in textual criticism of the Bible for which Boyle equipped himself by careful study of the sacred books in their original Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac or

Greek. In *The Martyrdom of Theodora and Didymus* he, in Dr. Johnson's words, was the first 'to employ the ornaments of romance in the decoration of religion', and the result, in Mr. More's judgment, is a story of arresting interest in spite of its faults of false emphasis, stilted diction and inordinate length. Widely read though this work was, it was his moralizing essays, *Occasional Reflections upon Several Subjects*, which made him one of the most popular writers of his day. To-day they are perhaps more often remembered as having suggested Swift's parody in *A Meditation on a Broomstick*. Other of Boyle's religious works prompt a valuable chapter on 'Boyle and Anglican Theology', which sufficiently vindicates Boyle's own thesis that, whatever the opponents of science in his day might say, the mechanistic philosophy was a witness to God's purpose and laws and not an argument for atheism.

To Boyle's scientific achievements and writings Mr. More does full justice. In view of the frequency of alchemy as a topic in medieval and renaissance literature one might perhaps specially mention his illuminating chapters on 'Alchemy and Medieval Science' and 'Boyle as Alchemist', while those who seek an introduction to the Aristotelian natural philosophy against which the Baconians reacted will welcome the lucid analysis in Mr. More's final chapter.

F. E. BUDD.

**A Comparison between the Two Stages: A late Restoration Book of the Theatre.** Edited by STARING B. WELLS. (Princeton Studies in English, vol. 26). Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1942; London: Humphrey Milford, 1945. Pp. xxiv+206. 20s. net.

*A Comparison between the Two Stages* (1702) belongs to that type of dramatic commentary which is half criticism and half gossip. The 'Two Stages' are Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields (to which Betterton had seceded in 1695, taking with him most of the best actors of the day), and the 'Comparison' is carried on in three bouts of conversation between Ramble, Sullen, and Chagrin, a critic. *A Comparison*, which was published anonymously, used to be attributed to Charles Gildon; but twenty years ago the late Mr. Thorn-Drury questioned this attribution (*R.E.S.*, vol. 1, 1925, p. 96). Dr. Wells does not discuss the authorship in his Introduction, but refers the reader to his article in *J.E.G.P.*, vol. xxxviii, pp. 233-46, where he too refuses to admit that Gildon wrote the piece.

It is certainly not too good for Gildon. To re-read this scarce little book in Dr. Wells's careful edition it, quite frankly, to suffer a certain disappointment. One expected more, not from the editor, but from the book itself: the attraction must have lain, more than one had realized, in its rarity. Dr. Wells claims for it that it is 'replete with contemporary allusions and gossip', and is 'a storehouse of fact and opinion'; but the facts, as he himself has often to point out in his notes, are frequently of questionable value, and the opinion is too often vitiated by the author's determination to make Sullen and Chagrin live up to their names. *A Comparison*, in fact, comes nearer to being a libel than a piece of dramatic criticism, and the persistent sneers at authors and players end by becoming tedious.

Dr. Wells is as careful and painstaking as his author is offhand and reckless. His annotation is, as he admits, on the full side; but he has cleared up almost every obscurity, and he has made good use of newspapers and pamphlets in elucidating contemporary references. Sometimes he might have told us more.

In annotating 'the late Whale at Cuckhold's-point' (p. 41) he refers us to a passage in Ned Ward which does not add much to our information. Whales, of course, were stranded fairly frequently along the coast; but I suspect that the whale in question may have been the one which was advertised in *The Post Boy*, 2 January, 1700, as being on view at Smithfield: 'The Skeleton or Bones of the Great Whale, lately taken in the River of Thames, being now well dried, clean'd, and exactly put together, may be daily seen in a large Booth . . . in West-Smithfield; and that every Person may have the Advantage of seeing so great a Curiosity, the Price is put at 3d. . . . ' Cuckold's Point perhaps deserved a note (if only a reference to Cunningham-Wheatley); and 'as plain as St. Pauls in the great Map of London' (p. 22), and 'Commend me to King Jemmy's English Surloin' (p. 41) both stand in need of some explanation. (On the second of these the *O.E.D.* refers the reader to Swift's *Polite Conversations*; 'Our King James the first . . . being invited to Dinner by one of his Nobles, and seeing a large Loyn of Beef at his Table, he drew out his Sword, and . . . knighted it.' But an earlier quotation assigns this hoary witticism to Henry VIII, and a later quotation to Charles II). Sullen's remark (p. 36) that 'in a flaming full bottom'd Wig' he would look 'like the King's Head peeping out of the Royal-Oak' is explained by the editor as perhaps involving some allusion to the Royal Oak Lottery. More probably it alludes to an inn-sign. The charge against Dryden (p. 37) that 'it had been better with some young Writers if he had been in Peace some Years ago' is adequately annotated: but perhaps the best evidence of this attitude of impatience to the aged Dryden is to be found in Nicholas Rowe's lines (published in 1701) complaining how

. . . Bayes grown old, and hardened in offence,  
Was suffer'd to write on in spite of sense . . .  
Still the prevailing faction propt his throne  
And to four volumes let his plays run on.

Dr. Wells seems, however, to have missed little, and shirked less. He has shown himself a judicious and well-informed editor; it is to be hoped that he will now turn to some other and more important work in the same period.

JAMES R. SUTHERLAND.

**The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence.** Vols. 11-12. Edited by W. S. LEWIS and A. DAYLE WALLACE with the Assistance of CHARLES H. BENNETT and EDWINE M. MARTZ. New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Oxford University Press. 1944. Vol. 11 (1, 1788-1791) correspondence with Mary and Agnes Berry and Barbara Cecilia Seton, pp. liv+378; vol. 12 (II, 1793-1796) the same continued with Appendix and Index, pp. x+402. £4 14s. 6d. net the set.

Advantageous, as is in many ways, the Yale Edition's method of arrangement by correspondences, it is valuable to refer to the general corpus of Walpole's letters in order to estimate the relative proportions of each correspondence. In no case is this more necessary than with the present volumes where we have 172 letters from Walpole to the Berrys, including seven to their cousin Barbara Seton, all written between October 1788 and his death. A glance down the contents lists of the Toynbee edition serves to show how these letters preponderate, while a closer inspection reveals that only eighty-five letters to Lady Ossory survive during this period, and that the frequency of letters to her varies in inverse proportion to the fluctuations of the Berry correspondence.

This observation is significant, especially in the light of a theory current at present according to which Walpole from time to time deliberately chose his major correspondents who were to be the trustees to posterity of his letters. In this way Lady Ossory is held to have succeeded Montague as the recipient of Walpole's chronicle of society. It is a little difficult to see why such a theory is thought necessary, and it might be still more difficult to support it in detail. On the basis of it alone, however, one might reasonably infer that Walpole was distracted by no ordinary influence if it led him to sacrifice his self-imposed duty to Lady Ossory and to posterity for the Berrys' sake. Nor did he adopt these attentive young ladies as links with the future. What an opportunity was there for an old man painfully conscious that time was running out. Yet these letters are largely preoccupied with the 'base currency' as he called it of suburban gossip, and with what Mrs. Damer terms 'his grand fusses'. Tiresome as these outpourings of anxiety and occasional petulance may be, they are, on any theory, plain illustrations of the engrossing character of his attachment.

In the face of this evidence Mr. Lewis lightly concludes in his introduction that Walpole was 'in love' with the Berrys just as he was with 'the Duchess of Richmond and Margaret Young, his housekeeper, with Rosette and Tory, Salvator Rosa and Domenichino, Shakespeare and Strawberry Hill', and that it was 'a thoroughly common-sensical relationship on both sides. They delighted in each other's company, and that was that'. With like impatience less than justice is done to the question whether there was ever any project of marriage between Walpole and Mary, and to Mary's brief engagement to General O'Hara. Instead of glancing at some second hand gossip of the next century, Mr. Lewis would have done better to refer to Mary's dignified and sensible letter to a friend which clearly implies that no such idea was in the head of either of them. There is some evidence that Walpole viewed the world's suspicions with some amusement, while the serious Mary was sharply pained by the tattle of the newspapers. It is unfortunate that the editors, who have tracked down so much, have failed to discover these paragraphs.

It is hardly the right approach to the affair with O'Hara to say that Mary was in fear of Walpole's discovering her engagement. Walpole had long been aware of her inclinations. This is clear from his letters, and one of Mrs. Damer's shows that he knew more of the contemplated marriage than he chose to reveal. What Mary feared was the effect her marriage would have not merely on her friend, but on her father and her sister, all of whom she regarded as very dependent on herself, and wisely (as it proved) she decided to spare them the pain of anticipating an event, which in fact never occurred, largely through her solicitude for them. Mr. Lewis might well have incorporated in his introduction the evidence from Mary's correspondence with Mrs. Damer and O'Hara, extracts from which are not very obviously embedded in the text of the second volume.

Not very happy either are an onslaught on Mrs. Damer's morals and slighting references to Lady Mary Churchill and the Duchess of Gloucester. The first was a close friend of Mary, whose character was beyond reproach, and who was always remembered by her with deep affection. The evidence that the others were suspicious of Walpole's testamentary intentions is distinctly conjectural. Such suspicions would be natural. Yet it would appear that the circle of ladies surrounding Walpole was unexpectedly harmonious. The Berrys, strangers alike to the family and to that region of society, seem to have been accepted graciously as Walpole's friends; and there is no suggestion that their motives



were mercenary. In this relation, however, it does not seem to have been noted before how fond Walpole is of the word 'codicil' in his letters to Mary. He uses it metaphorically in a variety of contexts. There are codicils to gout, to summer, to the diversions of London, and so on in some ten places. What the harping on this word conveyed to Mary we do not know. We do not know how far it was an unconscious though natural preoccupation, or how far Walpole was enjoying a comedy which is one of the last diversions of age. As has already been suggested, Walpole was quite capable of enjoying the humorous aspects of what was a most serious matter for him. But the Berrys' precarious finances were a real concern to him, and he managed to do what he could for them in his will with great delicacy, and without injuring or offending the others.

The commentary is in the frequent and full style which has been noticed in reviews of the previous volumes. Every work of reference and contemporary newspapers have been ransacked for the smallest details even to the point of telling us (ii, 26) when the sun set in October 1793. The commentators have an uncertain touch in dealing with London and English institutions. Doctors' Commons (i, 11 and 281) is imperfectly explained. The note on Lloyd's Coffee House (i, 305) reads oddly—'i.e. Lloyds the insurance society'! Petty France, Walpole's name for the French colony at Richmond is an allusion to a street in Westminster. It might have been explained (ii, 70) that 'the Groyne' was, and perhaps still is, the British sailor's name for Corunna, a corruption presumably of the Spanish pronunciation. It is hardly satisfactory to say that the function of masters in chancery is to assist the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords (i, 46). There is a lack of co-ordination and emphasis in some notes, e.g. those relating to the rivalry of the King and the Prince of Wales in supporting different theatres (i, 205 and 227). Most of the literary allusions have been traced. It hardly seems likely that Walpole meant 'Thyrsis' when he wrote 'Tircis' (ii, 30); nor does a reference to Virgil's shepherd seem apposite. Statira and Roxana (i, 312 and i, 362) are explained as Alexander the Great's wives. The allusions seem rather to be to Calprenède's *Cassandre* and possibly Defoe's *Roxana*.

The index on the familiar elaborate scale is excellent and sometimes throws more light than the commentary. A note (i, 125) explains 'waterworks' as figures weeping round a deathbed in a picture! The index sees that it means the picture itself, i.e. a water colour by Agnes. The reader, however, may be sent on a wild goose chase. If he does not know what a 'zebecque' is (i, 162) and turns to the index, he is told to see 'xebecque' and from there he is referred back to the text and is no wiser. There are quite a number of obsolete English words or customs left unexplained, and once more we should like to ask for a more helpful treatment of Latin quotations and allusions for the benefit of readers who in the Johnsonian sense of the word are 'illiterate'.

D. M. Low.

**Strange Seas of Thought. Studies in William Wordsworth's Philosophy of Man and Nature.** By NEWTON P. STALLKNECHT. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press. 1945. Pp. x+284. \$3.50.

This is an honest and a valuable book, by a Professor of Philosophy who cares for poetry, and who will be recognized by Wordsworthians as a true Wordsworthian. His purpose is to 'examine the content and the origin of the major concepts by means of which Wordsworth presents his view of life'. He does justice to Hartley's influence, bare justice to Spinoza's, and perhaps rather more than justice to that of Jacob Boehme. But the value of his investigation of the origins



of the poet's thought—and indeed the value of any such investigation so long as it is honest and intelligent—lies in the illumination it throws upon the thought itself, whether or not the poet drew directly upon the particular sources investigated. Coleridge valued Boehme and must have communicated something of what he found in him: Boehme told Wordsworth nothing that he did not know, but may have clarified and helped to give form to some of his intuitive experience. Wordsworth had a copy in his library of Edward Taylor's *Jacob Behmen's Theosophick Philosophy Unfolded*, and from this work Professor Stallknecht quotes paragraphs which illustrate some of the ideas in the profound passage at the opening of *The Prelude* Book XIII on the vision from Snowdon. Images and words, the 'abyss', the 'majestic intellect', have curious parallels in Boehme. Did Wordsworth really draw inspiration from the mystic here? Perhaps not. But in any case the parallel passages cast some glimmering light on an obscure place in the poet's thought. Similarly Boehme's belief in the 'outbreathing' of God into Nature, illustrated here by significant quotations, has a close kinship with Wordsworth's thought in the much quoted, little understood lines:

Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe!  
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,  
That givest to forms and images a breath  
And everlasting motion . . .

Wordsworth understood the meaning of Spirit as breath: again and again in his poetry breath or breeze or wind are the symbols of poetic inspiration. If we seek a literary origin for this thought we need not go beyond the Bible: 'The Spirit bloweth where it listeth'. In Boehme he might have read: 'The Holy Scripture says that Wisdom is the breathing of the Divine Power, a ray and breath of the Almighty', and he would have found in Boehme a close though somewhat obscure exposition of the idea of the Divine Imagination working itself out in Nature and Man. Again the analogy is instructive, casts indeed 'an auxiliar light' on the meaning of Wordsworth's profound thought, which the clearest-sighted of us must still grope after. We would only demur at Professor Stallknecht's too hard-drawn description of the process by which Wordsworth absorbed Boehme's thought: 'Wordsworth probably learned something of this doctrine [that of the mind that feeds upon infinity] from Coleridge, and then proceeded to extract from it what seemed consistent with his own point of view.' It might more truly be said that Wordsworth may have heard something of this doctrine from Coleridge, and may unconsciously have absorbed from it elements that harmonized with his own thought.

Professor Stallknecht's interpretation of Wordsworth's thought is on the whole sane and true, but he seems to us at one point to leave the main road and follow a will-o'-the-wisp. His chapter on 'The Moral of the Ancient Marinere' sets out to prove that Coleridge in that poem elaborated a consistent allegory of which the subject was the cure for the abuse of reason in a regained exercise of sensibility and love towards Nature, leading on to a deeper love of man: he thinks that this foreshadows the philosophy of *The Prelude* and that Wordsworth explicitly refers to this meaning of 'The Ancient Marinere' in *Prelude* XI (lines 42 ff.)

'What avail'd,

When Spells forbade the voyager to land . . .'

He believes that Coleridge may have begun the poem 'without any didactic intention at all, only realizing the poem's philosophical possibilities when he reached the third and fourth parts'. Now this, we submit, is not a tenable position.

If any poem in the English language has a complete unassailable unity it is 'The Ancient Mariner'. The seven parts fit together like stones in an arch, with Part IV as the keystone, each part closing with a significant reference to the Albatross, the symbol of the central idea. The theme is indeed Wordsworthian: a curse falls upon a man for an act of cruelty towards one of God's creatures, the spell only to be lifted by a renewed outgoing of sympathy and love. But to press the allegory further, and to insist on its application to Wordsworth's personal experience of the futility of analytical reasoning is to misread his texts.

Professor Stallknecht has read Professor de Selincourt's edition of *The Prelude* with close attention and with fine discernment, and he is one of the first critics to see the value and significance of the passages in manuscript which Wordsworth never published (especially those from MSS. W. and Y.). He has the merit of putting philosophy in its right place in relation with poetry: he says of Wordsworth, 'his account of the unity of things is richer not only in tone but in actual content than anything to be found in philosophical literature'. And in spite of his modest disavowal of any claim to estimate Wordsworth's poetry on aesthetic grounds he shows more than once a true imaginative sense of the meaning of poetry; witness this passage on 'The Solitary Reaper':

Let us suggest that the noblest expression of the sentiment of Being, both in its spatial and its temporal aspects, is Wordsworth's poem, *The Solitary Reaper*. The girl, singing in the fields becomes for a moment the center of the universe. All history and all geography are seen to exist only as the vast margins of her momentary yet eternal presence. It seems to the poet that her song and the world that it reveals can have no ending. The reaper's song is a symbol of the eternity which encompasses her life, of that unity and fullness of Being which 'lies far hidden from the reach of words'.

One or two corrections and suggestions:

P. 159. Coleridge first addressed the *Ode to Dejection* to Sara Hutchinson, not to Wordsworth (*Essays and Studies*, English Association, xxii, 'Coleridge's *Ode to Dejection*', by E. de Selincourt). The argument here would have been strengthened by a reference to Coleridge's lines in 'To a Gentleman' (Jan. 1807.):

thy soul received  
The light reflected as a light bestowed.

Pp. 223 ff. The change in Wordsworth's thought from the philosophy of *The Prelude*, 'a philosophy of confidence and enlightened self-assertion', to a philosophy of stoical submission to the universal moral law did not take place suddenly as Professor Stallknecht more than once states (see pp. 229 and 244). It was not so rapid as he implies, nor was it ever complete. Wordsworth's was a slow and deep nature: changes in his thought as in his character were not sudden, but worked slowly through his whole being.

A final tribute of praise is due, and is gladly paid by an inveterate Wordsworthian, to this modest and scholarly book, which by its sensitive approach and its wide range of reference has opened up new ways to the understanding of a great poet—a poet whose thought is deep and difficult and always worth the labour of probing, since its springs are among the central springs of human experience.

HELEN DARBISHIRE.

**Sir Max Beerbohm: Bibliographical Notes.** By A. E. GALLATIN. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1944; London: Humphrey Milford, 1945. Pp. xiv+121. Two guineas net.

This book will be warmly welcomed by those whose interest in Sir Max Beerbohm is comparable to Mr. Gallatin's. Much labour must have gone to the making of it, and it is worthy of the honour of publication in war time by a university press. It contains a bibliography of the first and other editions of Sir Max's works together with a list of introductions which he has written for books, a list of uncollected and unpublished writings, one of caricatures, the first documentation on his plays, a list of the catalogues of his exhibitions of caricatures, a section entitled 'Maxiana' and a list of studies on Sir Max as well as references. There are also ten reproductions of drawings in Mr. Gallatin's collection, of which all but one are here reproduced for the first time.

The book has some shortcomings, and perhaps Mr. Gallatin will carry his work further and produce a supplement. He does not always give as much information as he might. For instance, it is not from him but from John Lane that one can learn that 'Beccerius'—is Mr. Gallatin correct in saying that it was written at Oxford?—was printed on rough yellow paper. Surely there must be scores of unpublished caricatures besides those which Mr. Gallatin mentions. Certainly he does not mention the caricatures in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, those in the first two volumes of the *Greyfriar* and in *Farrago* of October 1930 (referred to in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 9 December, 1944, p. 611), the caricature of A. E. Housman which Dr. John Rothenstein kindly tells me is in the possession of his family, and the caricature dated March 1929 with the title 'Prime Ministers in my day—and mostly tremendous luminaries in theirs', which was reproduced in the *London Mercury* of June 1937 and is in the possession of Lord Baldwin, by whom it was lent to an Exhibition of Worcestershire Treasures at the Victoria Institute, Worcester.

There are more uncollected writings by Sir Max than Mr. Gallatin mentions. For instance, letters in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 28 February, 1924 and 26 November, 1925 are not mentioned. Mr. Gallatin says that there are various references to M. B. in E. V. Lucas's *Post-Bag Diversions*. It would be correct to say that that book consists of letters and includes parts of three written by Sir Max. The section 'Maxiana' does not mention that 'A letter that was not written' is included in *Prose of To-Day*, published by Longmans in 1928.

Among the studies and notes on Sir Max Mr. Gallatin makes no mention of the article by J. H. Miles in the fourteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, of Miss A. K. Tuell's 'The Prose of Max Beerbohm' in the *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. xxx, 1931, pp. 190 ff., W. S. Hall's 'Max Beerbohm' in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, 19 September, 1931, Miss M. A. Reilly's 'Max Beerbohm, Writer of Satire' in the *University of Pittsburgh Bulletin*, October 1936, pp. 345 f., A. C. Ward's *Twentieth Century Literature*, 1928, pp. 163-8, S. Gibson's correction in the *Bodleian Quarterly Record*, vol. III, 1922, pp. 248 f. of an error in Sir Max's essay entitled 'A Defence of Cosmetics', and W. Talbot's reference in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 15 July, 1926 to an early edition of *The Happy Hypocrite*. Of items which have appeared since the publication of Mr. Gallatin's book may be mentioned 'Coffee with Sir Max', by C. Honig in the *New Statesman and Nation*, vol. xxix, 745, 2 June, 1945, pp. 351 f.

Mr. Gallatin is shaky on people's names. For instance, R. B. Cunningham-Graham appears as R. B. C. Grayham, Lord Grimthorpe as Grimthrop, and

Laurence Binyon as Lawrence Binyon; Leonard Courtney and W. L. Courtney are not two persons but one, and so are Pearsall Smith and L. P. Smith, Solomon Eagle and J. C. Squire, Alfred Harmsworth and Lord Northcliffe, S. B. Bancroft and Sir Squire Bancroft, Donald Wing and D. G. Wing, Lord Oxford and the person to whom Mr. Gallatin refers as Lord Asquith.

There are mistakes or omissions in the lists of contents of *More, A Book of Caricatures, A Christmas Garland* and *Even Now*. The index should be fuller and include, for example, Lord William Nevill, Jowett, and Lord Lytton.

G. B. A. FLETCHER.

**Two Lectures on an Æsthetic of Literature.** By B. S. MARDEKHAR  
Bombay: Karnatak Publishing House. 1944. Pp. viii+52. (No price given.)

In these two lectures Mr. Mardekhar attempts to formulate a criterion of a literary 'work of art'.

He first rejects (1) the very crude theories that use of imagery, choice of diction, or genre, are themselves criteria of literary value; (2) the more refined theory, that value depends on successful communication. His own standpoint here, though basically correct, seems partly confused.

He then develops the view that literary value lies in the form of what is communicated. He discards as unfruitful the 'Aristotelian' notions of 'a beginning, middle, and end', and of 'probable sequence'. His arguments, however, seem partly based on a misunderstanding of Aristotle's terminology, and are at times logically weak. Nevertheless, he makes some very just observations. Mr. Mardekhar's own view is that a literary work is more fruitfully regarded as a 'centripetal pattern of emotional rhythms' governed by 'the laws of harmony, contrast and balance'. Here he draws an analogy with the logical laws of identity, contradiction and excluded middle. This part of the book is philosophically interesting, but marred by some flaws in the detailed working-out of the system. For example, Mr. Mardekhar's purported formulation of the laws of harmony, contrast, and balance, is in fact only a series of definitions.

The book concludes with a brief application of the 'laws' to literary criticism. Mr. Mardekhar analyses language into syntax, atomic words, and relational words, and states that only relational words express the pattern of emotional rhythms. This is unconvincing.

On his view, Mr. Mardekhar bases a technique, and gives a few examples of its working. These have a certain plausibility; but there is no example of comparative evaluation, and I doubt whether the technique could be of wide use or great value.

To sum up: The notions of harmony, contrast and balance are useful, and Mr. Mardekhar's definitions of them interesting; but he has formulated no laws about them, and his detailed application of them is based on mistaken views about language. Thus his analysis in its present form has not provided a workable criterion for the evaluation of literature. Nevertheless, his two lectures are stimulating, and much can be learned from reading them.

THEODORE REDPATH.



**The Conflict of Homonyms in English.** By EDNA REES WILLIAMS. (Yale Studies in English, vol. 100). New Haven: Yale University Press; London: H. Milford. 1944. Pp. xii + 130. 20s. net.

At the beginning of the twentieth century a new method of linguistic science was introduced in France, which investigated the geographical and social distribution of words and the causes of their disappearance from use. This new linguistic geography was greatly developed by Gillieron and his collaborators in studies based on their *L'Atlas Linguistique de la France*. Among other principles they established that the confusion resulting from homonymy is a frequent cause of the disappearance of words. Hitherto there has been no detailed exposition of the theory of the French linguists corroborated by examples from the English language. The most important single article on the conflict of homonyms in English was written by Professor Robert J. Menner, in *Language*, vol. XII (1936).

Miss Edna Rees Williams has set out to define and justify the theories of the French scholars, and by applying their methods in a study of English words, to develop further the suggestions of Professor Menner. She has divided her book into two parts: the Introduction (more than a third of the whole) is about the theory of the conflict of homonyms; the second part, comprising six separate studies, traces the history and regional distribution of the words belonging to several groups of English homonyms.

The Introduction, which makes no claim to originality, as the copious acknowledgement of indebtedness for principles, terminology, arguments, and illustrations shows, is a lucid and simple exposition of the work of the French linguists, very readable and convincing. Miss Williams persuades by defining exactly the limits of her thesis; she is careful to avoid sweeping generalizations, and cleverly employs the mistakes of the opponents of the new theory to establish her own principles the more securely. Thus she insists that the following conditions are essential before the disappearance of words can safely be attributed to the conflict of homonyms: not only must the words be identical in sound, but there must also be a chance of confusion through the similarity of their meaning and of their syntactical function in the sentence, and these conditions must all be present in the same district and at the same period.

This book not only introduces to the student the methods and the scope of linguistic geography, but is in itself an incentive to further research. Many readers of the Introduction will wish that more examples were taken from the English language, fewer from the French, but the clear summary of the effects of the conflict together with the persuasive argument will tempt them to collect examples from English usage for themselves. Sufficient guidance is given for this, and also there are many hints of the possibilities of still wider exploration.

There is the same logical clearness and stimulating variety in the second part of the book where Miss Williams has selected groups of homonyms to illustrate many of the different occasions of conflict in the English language. She notes such results from them as variation between the different dialects, words becoming obsolete, words sometimes being replaced by French or Scandinavian substitutes, or being modified in form or limited in meaning. To her already lucid letterpress she adds diagrams and charts.

Unfortunately one cannot accept the second part of the book as proof absolute of the first. Miss Williams was herself aware of the limitations of the data for anyone attempting such a study. The English language lacks the detailed and accurate charting of the geographical distribution of words to be found in



*L'Atlas Linguistique*. There are reliable chronological data in the *New English Dictionary*, and Miss Williams makes good use of them; but the geographical records are inadequate because incomplete. The *English Dialect Dictionary* quotes chiefly by counties, and elsewhere detailed dialect studies of separate areas are comparatively few. The maps therefore can only approximate to the truth, and want of data may explain some of the slight discrepancies which appear between Miss Williams's charts and her thesis. The evidence for and against her theories is presented in an honest and scholarly way, and only very occasionally does one want to contest her argument. She is least convincing in her study of the conflict between *queen* (O.E. *cwēn*, 'queen') and *quean* (O.E. *cwene*, 'harlot'), when she attributes the preservation of both words in parts of the North Midlands to 'phonetic differentiation through the initial consonants'. There was a marked tendency for words beginning with *qu* to appear in North Midland texts with initial *w* or *wh*, and Miss Williams implies that of the two words *quean* alone shared this tendency. But in one text, at least, belonging to this area (*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ll. 74, 2492) 'queen' too appeared as *whene*.

Despite one's suspicion that arguments based on regional use are not conclusive in the present state of knowledge, Miss Williams's general thesis is acceptable. This was a book about English homonyms which needed to be written. Its shortcomings are mostly due to circumstances over which its writer had no control, and its appearance will probably encourage other students to help to fill in the gaps, and to make further advances in the fruitful research of linguistic geography.

PHYLLIS HODGSON.

### SHORT NOTICE

**Johnson and Boswell: THREE ESSAYS.** By BERNARD H. BRONSON. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1944. University of California Publications in English, Vol. 3, No. 9, pp. 363-476. \$1.00.

These essays have been reprinted in the form of an offprint from volume 3 of the University of California Publications in English. The first two essays, *Johnson Agonistes* and *Boswell's Boswell*, are excellent examples of an unassuming scholarship which looks no further for its material than the published work of a writer, and by judicious presentation exhibits his mind and temperament in a new and convincing light. *Johnson Agonistes* resolves the apparent inconsistency of Johnson's volcanic temperament and his conservatism, and suggests that owing to a change in our notions of what constitutes political progress the man whose convictions led him to resist the forces of progress in the eighteenth century would range himself with the progressive parties to-day. In *Boswell's Boswell*, Mr. Bronson uses Boswell's journals to show Boswell's 'double consciousness' of himself, both enjoying his immediate sensations and at the same time regarding himself as an actor in society, the merits of whose performance he coolly assesses. The essay on *Johnson's 'Irene'* is necessarily of less general interest. A study of earlier plays on the same theme leads Mr. Bronson to qualify the somewhat summary treatment accorded to them in the Oxford edition of Johnson's poems. An attempt is made to discover in *Irene* some reflection of Johnson's personal feelings, and the essay concludes with a sympathetic estimate of the play as a tragedy in the pseudo-classical manner.

The Cambridge University Press are understood to be the agents of the University of California Press in this country. We look to them to ensure that these essays reach the public in the pleasing format which they deserve but have not yet been given and which the Cambridge University Press know so well how to provide.

JOHN BUTT.

## SUMMARY OF PERIODICAL LITERATURE

BY KATHLEEN TILLOTSON

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